

Opening our Hearts to the Evening's Story – based on Luke 2:1-20
Aspen Community UMC
December 24 and 25, 2008

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May we breathe deeply of peace
and let our hearts be open to the evening's story.
Let's think about that story – and its characters – and what they have for us tonight.

Like the wandering couple - young and naïve – but full of faith that all would turn out well.
It just didn't look like it at first. And yet, this confusing time that didn't seem to start off well -
would turn out to bring the greatest joy they could imagine.

I wonder if you have ever been in a place where you knew something in your life
was going to change – and you were not sure how –
but you went on in faith – and let it unfold -
and it did so in a glorious way?

Like the harried innkeeper - I wonder if you have ever been asked to help someone -
and you figured out a way – and low and behold – you are sure glad you did.
For what came of it – was very different than you had imagined possible.
And you decided that helping others is a good way to go.

Like the lumbering beasts – the sheep, the cattle, the animals -
who were silent witnesses to the amazing wonders of life.
Are there times when you have just observed –
not judged or tried to second guess what was going on?

Like the shepherds on the hill, have you ever decided not to be afraid
when circumstances would have caused you to be afraid -
were it not for a voice inside that said – don't be afraid?

Like the journeying wise men, have you had a time or perhaps you are ready for that time -
when you gather the courage to follow your star?

When you know that there is so much in you and it needs to be lived?

There is promise that has been left untapped – inside of you.

And if you had a wise grandparent or aunt or uncle – or like Merlin was to King Arthur –
and they whispered in your ear – go after that great idea you have – and live it -

for the world will be better for it.

And you found the courage to do it.

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Like the angels who sang in the heavens -
calling for us to find peace among people and nations -
maybe there are ways you need to make peace among those you know -
for peace really comes about one person at a time.



These things represent much of what life is about.
I don't have to tell you that these days are troubling days in our nation.
It seems that some – maybe much – of the economic structure –
and manufacturing structure especially for automobiles is just almost up for grabs.
It is time to rethink and retool and rework a lot of what we have done.
Some of the established ways of doing finance and manufacturing
came to have too many vested interests –
too much greed – even by good people –
and too many ways for the unscrupulous to take advantage.
Perhaps that is natural – for things to change – for ways of doing things to have their season -
and then the world is ready for new ideas and new ways of doing things.



Maybe that is what was happening when Mary and Joseph took the courageous steps they took.
And, even more, for Jesus to take the steps he took when he grew to be a man -
and taught us how to live.

So for these six things – they do represent much of what life is about.
Challenge in the face of new circumstances – being afraid – helping one another -
being amazed – finding courage to follow our star –
and calling for peace when conflict is much easier.

The people in our story tonight have a lot to say to us – even today.
Let's invite them into our hearts and let them tell their story and sing their song.
For we too are in a time of great change.
We are in need of their courage –
and their willingness to help one another – and their sense of wonder.
and their willingness to follow a star.



May this be a blessed Christmas for you. Amen.