

Christ Church, Dartmouth

December 24th Christmas Eve 2020

The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner

“The Light: Hope in a Dark Time”

In this winter’s deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the promised king will illumine the world. This light will bring endless hope, peace, joy and love, and justice. The angels declare that Jesus’ birth is good and that the child is joyful news for everyone, even those lowly shepherds. Filled with this light that shines in our lives, tonight we gather differently, but we nonetheless share the light of Christ with the whole world.

For many, there have been so many dark times in 2020. This is, as we know, the year of the virus. Many people have passed away; doctors, nurses, scientists, and essential workers have gone above and beyond as we anticipated the creation of the vaccine. Our advent truly has been one of expectation hasn’t it? Governments around the world have been doing their best to hold up their citizens, and here in Nova Scotia, we have been accustomed to weekly updates and guidance.

There has been such tragedy this year, such darkness. Darkness like on that terrifying night for Mary and Joseph. Unsure as to where they would find safety and lodging. So, this Christmas Eve, we give thanks for the light of Christ, and recognize it not in the church building, but in our hearts, our minds, and souls. This evening you are most likely worshipping with us online. We are not gathered in our beloved church, but instead, we are in our own homes. But remember Jesus instructed “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” My friends, Christmas has not been cancelled. In many ways, Christmas has grown and brought back to its roots.

So long ago, the young woman and man travelled as refugees, from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to fulfill the prophecy. I believe Mary and Joseph represent us all. They represent our need to provide sanctuary for the migrant family, the homeless person. They represent our need to fight systemic racism. They show us that amid the smelly dirt and straw, a baby was born, a child that flipped the world on its head, a child who showed us what compassion and love is!

This is the Christmas story. A simple one. You have seen the words floating around Facebook that reads “The First Christmas was pretty simple. It’s okay if yours is too.” How real are these words? Maybe God is telling us something? Perhaps the world has been shaken up as we battle a virus that does not discriminate. Maybe this is the opportunity for us to truly live the Christmas story as we continue to show compassion and love to all. I genuinely believe God is telling us something. So, as we keep this Christmas simple, as we worship in our own homes, let us remember the light that shines in the darkness, a light that brings us the Christmas message after such a long Advent. Together let us learn to light a candle in the darkest moments of our lives, and in the lives of others. Let us be the light that helps others see. So, let us shout out loud this majestic eve “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God’s people on earth!”

AMEN.