# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“Good News”**

**Luke 2:10-11**

 **December 24, 2021**

I would like us to spend a few minutes this evening with two of the verses in the Christmas Story that Pastor McLane read earlier. Verses ten and eleven read as follows:

But the angel reassured the shepherds. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!”

Go back with me in your imagination to the scene in the fields outside Bethlehem. It is the middle of the night; darkness and quiet lie on the land. Suddenly, an angel of God appears and the glory of God shines on some unexpecting shepherds. They were terrified, and rightly so, for this was the unexpected appearance of a supernatural figure. Or, as the more refined King James Version of the Bible puts it: “They were sore afraid.”

I don’t know what the angel looked like, but I’m pretty sure it wasn’t like what we see on “Touched by an Angel” or “It’s a Wonderful Life.” We would not react to the appearance of an angel by saying, “O look darling, a cute little angel.” No, angels are mighty figures who reflect the awesomeness of God as they carry God’s message to people. When an angel shows up and a person is confronted by the glory of God, there is fear. You and I would have been afraid, too, if we had been there. But, when God shows up, he doesn’t want us to be afraid of him. He wants us to hear the good news he has for us.

This is why the first words the angel spoke were: “Don’t be afraid.” Don’t be afraid when God shows up to reveal to you that he is for you, that he loves you, and that he has sent his Son into the world to be your Savior. Don’t be afraid to accept this as truth, not just for others but for you. Don’t be afraid to commit yourself to him and to accept him as your Savior, the One who can bring you into an eternal relationship with God.

Why are you here tonight? We each have our own reasons and expectations for attending a Christmas Eve Service, but I believe that God has you here tonight so that you may hear his message to you: “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. The Savior has been born tonight.”

It is good to gather together and to celebrate that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. It is wonderful to sing the familiar carols in a Sanctuary beautifully decorated for the season. But, what really matters is Jesus Christ being born in the human heart. Your Bethlehem is when Christ comes to you and is born in you. It is this amazing parallel that constitutes the good news of Christmas. Jesus can be born in us as certainly as he was born in Bethlehem. “Fear not, for to *you* is born this day a Savior.”

The Savior does not promise to immediately take all our problems away, but he does say that he will be with us in them, helping us with our fears and giving us his hope, his peace, his joy. It is his love for us that will cast out our fears.

This is what Christmas can mean to us, if we will trust him and surrender our lives to him. All you are asked by God to do is receive the good news and believe that it is true. And each day of the year that lies ahead can be met without fear when you know that you have a Savior. No event, no circumstance can come into your life that will be too much for Jesus to take you through. May the good news of the angel’s proclamation 2,000 years ago be your good news today: “Fear not, for to *you* is born this day a Savior.”