

Merry Christmas.

“Fear not; for see –

I am bringing you good news of great joy:

to you is born this day in the city of David,

a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

The words from Luke’s gospel

Have been recited by Christians

On Christmas eve for well over a 1000 years.

In good times and bad,

In the various seasons of life,

These familiar words on Christmas eve

Are to comfort us and give us hope for the future.

It's good to sing Christmas carols again.

Later, we'll dim the lights,

Turn on our battery powered candles

And sing silent night.

It will be a holy moment.

Some of us wait all year for that beautiful moment.

Be careful, though.

Be aware of the trap of nostalgia.

Nostalgia is where most of us stay at Christmas.

We have been conditioned

to see Christmas from past experiences.

We remember what it was like for us as children.

Opening brightly wrapped presents

Underneath the lit, decorated tree

We have attached an emotion to this time of year.

we try to recapture and reproduce

what we think Christmas should be like,

more importantly, how Christmas should feel like.

Some of us get into the Christmas spirit

Vicariously living through others,

most of the time through children.

We had a great children's Pageant earlier today at 5:30.

Most of the time

it is through their eyes,

That we experience the joy of Christmas.

And sometimes,

and probably most of the time,

that is enough.

Maybe this year, you're not "feeling it."

Maybe, nostalgia isn't enough for you this Christmas?

On this night,

The church calls us to rejoice

No matter what's happening in our world.

What we rejoice in tonight is the power of love.

Love that is stronger than ourselves.

Tonight we take comfort in and rejoice at the good news

God saves us all from our own self-destruction by the power of
love.

The baby in the manger

wrapped in swaddling clothes

Is God's way to wholeness and human flourishing

It is at the nativity where the new way begins.

By grace, God has bestowed upon us unmerited favor.

For a renewed relationship with God,

And peace and goodwill with each other

Through the birth of our Lord.

God refuses to leave the world,

fractured and broken.

Love enters our darkness to be with us as one of us.

The baby in the manger

Is also the man

Who, out of love, gave his life

for the sake of the world.

This Love,

is named Wonderful Counselor,

mighty God,

Prince of Peace.

The good news tonight

Is that you can know peace

That the world cannot give

In the baby born in a manger

And the man on the cross.

We choose joy tonight

To celebrate the power of God's love

We take comfort knowing

Love refuses to leave us as we are

Love that refuses to leave the world as it is.

We choose joy,

because nothing separates us from God's love.

In Good times and bad,

"Do not be afraid; for see—

I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,

who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Amen

