

Sermon for December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve
“A Shepherd’s Tale”

Luke 2:1-20

I can imagine that a shepherd’s life can be pretty boring. Staying up all night watching your sheep. I imagine the shepherd spent time talking and telling stories to stay awake. I mean it wouldn’t do to nod off and wake up to find that your sheep have been scattered. Let’s listen in as one shepherd tell his story:

(Laughter) That was a good one Daniel. So who here has a story to top that one? What? Me? No. Oh, the night of the Angels, but all of you have heard that one so many times.

Well I guess some of you haven’t heard it. O.K. O.K. you don’t have to twist my arm. It was a night not unlike this one. The stars were bright and a group of us were grazing our sheep in a little valley like this, so that we could make out any sheep wandering off over the crest of the hill.

Well, all of a sudden there was a bright light. We shielded our eyes. It was as bright as the sunlight. We could see that the source was hovering over our valley but it was so bright that it took a while for our eyes to adjust. Then we could make out the figure of a man, with wings. Yes, I said wings, and it was hovering over the valley.

I looked away because it was so bright, and I saw the sheep. They were all coming to the center of the valley right under the light. To the angel, yes, it was an angel. I have only seen sheep act like that when they were being called by their shepherd. It was like the light was calling to the sheep.

Then the Angel spoke. His voice was like the sound of a waterfall and like the singing of a dove at the same time. He said “Don’t be afraid, I bring good news for everyone.” I think he said it because Daniel here was face down on the ground by then. Then he said, “Tonight the Messiah has been born for you in the city of David.” He also said that we would know the baby because it would be wrapped up and lying - in a manger. I mean who would put a baby in a manger? It sounded ridiculous!

Then the whole sky lit up and there was a whole flock of angels. They were praising God and singing. Did we go? Of course we went. An angel tells you to go, you go already! The sheep? Yes, we left them! The angels could watch over them for us.

So we went to Bethlehem and we looked. We told people what we had seen and many thought we were drunk, but one innkeeper told us that he had sent a woman about to give birth to the stable. There we found a baby - lying in a manger, - just like the angel had said! His mother and father seemed like average people. I think he was a carpenter. We told them what we had seen and they just took it in, but we could tell that this was an exceptional child, and we had seen him!

We told others as we made our way back to the fields. Some went to see for themselves, others just scoffed. Some believed and some didn’t. You believe me, don’t you? About the angels, and the Messiah, and the baby? Sometimes I have trouble believing it. I am an old man now, and I was so young then. Sometimes I have to ask Daniel here if that is what we really saw. It has been what - thirty years now. I wonder where that baby is now. He would be a full-grown man. (Squinting at the distance) David, is that you prize ewe about to wonder

off over there? You'd better go catch her, or you will be buying next year's Passover lamb from Daniel or me. Angels, what a night!