



December 20, 2017

LOVE AT THE CENTER OF LIFE

*“O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie
Beneath thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.”*

When we think of Bethlehem on this Christmas Eve, we think of it as still and silent. And it was, if you knew where to look. But mostly, Bethlehem was busy. The emperor’s census forced everyone to travel to their ancestral towns to register. I imagine all the inns full of people: uncomfortable, tired, and on edge—any little thing will set them off. They’re packed together in rooms, and served small portions to make the food go around. It’s hard to believe that there was a stillness or peace about Bethlehem that night.

Let’s remember that the birth of Christ was right in the midst of turmoil, because that’s how God comes into our lives today. God comes right in the middle of the mess: love at the center of life.

Sometimes we forget that God comes this way. We think that we will become close to God when we’ve gotten our acts together, when we’ve finally kicked our vices, when we get a handle on our priorities, and when we chalk up enough good deeds to earn some heavenly attention.

But the story that we remember on Christmas blasts that idea to pieces. Jesus didn’t come for those kinds of people; he came for the people so confused by forces pulling them in eleven different directions that they couldn’t see straight. Jesus came for people whose priorities were out of whack, whose vices threatened to destroy them, and who did good deeds only when they wanted to impress someone. That’s when we need God’s love at the center of life. And that’s how God comes to us. Always has been.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister