

Come, Let Us Adore Him: Joy

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael –December 24 2024

Christmas Eve

Tonight, I want to tell you the story of an empty stocking. Once upon a midnight clear there was a child's cry. A blazing star hung over a stable and wise men came with birthday gifts. We haven't forgotten that night down the centuries. We celebrate it with stars on Christmas trees, with the sound of bells and with gifts - but especially with gifts. You give me a book. I give you a tie. Aunt Martha has always wanted an orange squeezer and Uncle Henry could do with a new pipe. Oh, we forget nobody - adult or child. All the stockings are filled. All, that is, except one. And we have even forgotten to hang it up. The stocking for the child born in the manger. It's his birthday we're celebrating. Don't let us ever forget that. Let us ask ourselves what he would wish for most and then let each put in his share. Loving kindness, warm hearts... and a stretched-out hand of tolerance. All the shining gifts that make peace on earth.

These are not my words, but the words of one of my favorite Christmas movies, the Bishop's Wife. They are given in a sermon, and every year I hear those words and every year I find joy in them. Because they highlight just how easy it is to get caught up in all of the little Christmas things to the point that we forget the big ones. And the question that Bishop Brougham asks is a question that we are still called to reflect on. What is it Jesus would want for Christmas? While thinking of this, I was reminded of our recent Bible study and the prophet Micah. Because Micah says that we should enact justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. I think all of those things would be wonderful additions to our Christmas trees.

All through Advent we have been working on preparing with passion for the presence and promise of Christ. Tonight, we celebrate joy. That we come together to celebrate the joy of a child being born. We celebrate the joy of knowing that salvation is ours. We celebrate that we know the hope, peace, joy, and love that comes with knowing our risen Savior. We celebrate with the certainty that because of Christmas we

are never alone. Because we celebrate the birth of our Emmanuel, our God with us. With us in this room this very night. With us in all that we say and we do. And this celebration comes in many forms. I do not claim to give an exhaustive list here tonight, but I do think there are some obvious examples. We celebrate with music and we celebrate with stories. We celebrate with friends and family. We celebrate with movies and plays. We celebrate with gifts. We celebrate with baking. We celebrate by doing the things that bring us joy because they become an extension of the joy that we find in the birth of Jesus. We come together knowing that we are better together in Christ.

I pray that as we come together to celebrate the joy of a child born and laid in a manger, that we can remember to hang up his stocking. That we may remember to fill it with kindness. That we may put in our share of goodwill. That we can put faith and love into the stocking that they may be with us the whole year through. So, on this night I call us to band together like the shepherds that watched their flocks by night. May we hear the good news and rejoice. So, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord. Amen.

I hope you enjoy this special printing of our Christmas Eve message!

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