Christmas Eve 2023 Homily

*Preface: I do not typically write a homily for Christmas Eve. I prefer to let the gospel story in Luke tell the story. I split the reading from Luke as such:*

*Luke 1:3-56, Luke 2:1-7, Luke 2:8-20*

*Or*

*Luke 1:26-38 or Matthew 1:18-24; Luke 2:1-9; Luke 2:10-14; Luke 2:15-20*

*With hymns in between.*

*Also, I would preach and then read the Gospel today.*

Peace and Grace to you from God, Christ and Spirit.

We gather today to remember Our Savior Jesus Christ’s birthday and to worship and praise God for God’s gift. It is on this night that we experience God in a way like never before and never again in exactly this way. It is difficult for us to really center ourselves within the story for we are unlike any of the main players. We are not Mary. We are not Joseph. We are not shepherds. We are not angels. And we are certainly not Jesus. Who are we that hear these words that tell of a promise fulfilled and of a hope for the future? We come from many different backgrounds and experiences. We each have our own stories and our own truths learned from life. Our experiences of God, Son and Spirit are unique to us. If you turn and look at the person next to you, you may be looking at someone you know and love and yet a person who needs and craves to hear told to their hearts they are loved, they are wanted, they are valued, their presence is dear to you. TELL them. Not right now. Now it is time for God to tell them. Later for you.

Jesus did not only fulfill the prophecies of old. God presented him to Mary and Joseph and us in a way that is undeniable. In that particular way of a baby. In that particular way that connects us to God, to Jesus and to each other. And to promise. One cannot look at a baby and not hope for a tomorrow. A tomorrow where the world as we know it different. It is gentler, kinder, understanding; where wisdom prevails, fear is no more and love is the language of life.

So tonight I invite you to hear God speak through the scriptures to your heart. Hear the words that have been said and shared millions if not nonillions of times. Hear the story how much God loves you and each of us. Love so deep and wide that it needed to be shared in birth, swaddling, rocking, sharing, amazement, joy, hope, peace and love. And the greatest of these is love.