

Christmas 2020, 5:00pm Parking Lot Service
Rev. Adam T. Trambley
Luke 2:1-20
December 24, 2020, St. John's Sharon

Merry Christmas! Welcome to St. John's Drive-In Christmas service. And this drive-in service is not much different from how people experienced the first Christmas. Well, people didn't have cars then, but there were some similarities.

Two thousand years ago in Palestine, Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem. His family was socially distanced from Mary's relatives in Nazareth that would have been there. They were also distanced from Joseph's more important relatives who had taken all the good hotel rooms in Bethlehem already. They were an immediate family, joyfully experiencing the presence of the Son of God come into the world.

Then we hear about shepherds. The shepherds were told by angels to come to Bethlehem and see the Messiah, so they did. They ran to the stable, saw the baby Jesus, talked to his parents a bit, and went back to their fields. On that way home, they glorified and praised God for what they experienced. They offered their presence, received joy and peace from the baby Jesus, and went home transformed.

A bit later, the magi came. Regardless of how our nativity scenes are portrayed, the magi probably weren't crammed into a barn at the same time as all the shepherds. (50% occupancy rules). And they didn't stick around. In two verses of scripture, we are told they came, worshipped Jesus, gave him gifts, and then went home by a different route that God gave them in a dream. They offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh, received the gift of the presence of baby Jesus, and went home transformed.

Tonight, we encounter the newborn baby Jesus. Some of that happens in the carols we sing, some happens in the communion we are privileged together to celebrate tonight, and some happens in whatever personal ways that Jesus comes into our hearts. We don't have to be here all night – just long enough for us to present the gifts we want to offer our ever new-born King, and receive the gifts our Prince of Peace longs to bestow on us. We know we will go home transformed, even from this unusual drive-in Christmas communion service, because we have come to pay homage to the Son of God incarnate. His presence, his light, his joy, his peace, and especially his love, will go with us when we leave here to fill every aspect of our lives.