



Second Sunday after Christmas

2 January 2021

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio--seeking to know and serve Christ in loving service to the campus, the community, and the world.

The Lessons

Lessons for the Second Sunday after Christmas: Jeremiah 31: 7-14; Psalm 84: 1-8; Ephesians 1: 3-6, 15-19a; Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23. <https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel



Matthew 2:13-15,19-23

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in

Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

The Sermon

Dark Christmas

While most of the world is still recovering from New Year's Eve celebrations or lamenting that many gatherings were cancelled again this year due to the pandemic, today the Church is showing its countercultural tendencies. Not only are we still deep in the Season of Christmas, this Sunday's Gospel reading seems to be out of sync as it doesn't seem all that Christmassy. Instead of angels showing up in person proclaiming good news of great joy, they are doing the ancient equivalent of zoom by showing up in the dreams of one person and their news isn't that good. The angels of Joseph's dreams issued warnings that while Jesus is still a helpless baby he is already perceived as a threat to the rulers of the land, which means Joseph and Mary and Jesus have to move.

Today's Gospel has the magi already departed for home before the Church celebrates their arrival on the Feast of the Epiphany, which is still several days away, on Thursday, January 6.

Today's Gospel reading might have us ask what is the matter with the people who put our lectionary together. Why didn't they do a better job of telling the story in its proper order? Perhaps the answer is that our Sunday lectionary isn't like a novel. For the Church the Season of Christmas isn't 12 days of gift giving and receiving, or enjoying rich and delicious food, it is about reflecting on the Mystery of the Incarnation. Therefore, the scripture readings and prayers we have in our service today are intended to help us get closer to the Mystery of God becoming flesh and dwelling with us. Which isn't necessarily only about Jesus' birth, it can be about the circumstances of his coming into the world.

In Luke's Gospel the Incarnation looked like an angel showing up in person to Mary who agreed to participate in the Mystery. Incarnation looked like a world that didn't have room for God with Us, as Mary and Joseph had to leave home for Bethlehem only to struggle to find a place there for Jesus to be born. In John's Gospel the Mystery of the Incarnation is expressed with gorgeous words and phrases about the world not knowing Jesus, even though Jesus as part of God has been involved with the world since its beginning. Yet, despite this, the darkness of evil did not nor could not extinguish the light, the hope, the healing, the forgiveness that Jesus brings into the world.

Today we see how the author of Matthew's gospel explores the Mystery of the Incarnation through the circumstances in their gospel. In this Gospel there are dreams of warning and guidance, showing us God is influencing the actions and choices of Joseph. Like the other Gospels there is no room for Jesus in the world, as his presence is seen as a threat by those in power. Only the outsiders, the magi, recognized Jesus as God

with Us and believed things would change for the better. They saw Jesus as a king, which might be why they were off course and ended up at the palace of Herod, the cruel and jealous ruler of Judea instead of a common house where Jesus actually was.

In Matthew's Christmas Gospel we get to meet Herod, who was so frightened by the joy and hope the magi felt at Jesus' birth, the only way he imagined he could find joy and peace was to destroy Jesus before he even had a chance to grow up. To nip that emerging hope in the bud by killing all the male children in the region under the age of two.

For years, historians and scholars have struggled with Matthew's Christmas Gospel. Some insist the author of Matthew made it all up to make it look like Old Testament prophecies had come true. To link Jesus to Moses by sending him to Egypt and surviving the massacre of baby boys like in the Exodus story. These scholars insist there were no magi. No dreams by another Joseph. No slaughter of the innocents by Herod. No flight to Egypt. I can understand their desire to declare it all a convenient fiction when they can't find evidence in the historical documents available to them. This is not a happy story. It names and illustrates all kinds of darkness like the author of John mentioned in their Gospel and makes us all uncomfortable.

But other historians and scholars have a different perspective. The Herod of history was not above murdering anyone he considered a threat to his power. History has shown he had his own children and wife killed when he believed they were plotting against him and therefore a threat to his power. The population in the region in Matthew's Gospel was so used to violence and so small the number of male children under the age of two would have been small as well, so much so that their murders might not have been recorded or quickly forgotten after they happened. Like how in our modern times many people quickly forget similar tragedies like school shootings not long after they happen.

These scholars suggest the author of Matthew is showing us how Jesus is the Messiah through the circumstances of his birth. Matthew is taking difficult, uncomfortable, tragic events and showing us how God came to be with us in the worst parts of life, in the parts where we are afraid, where we are hurting, where we grieve.

Jesus did not come into a world ruled by violent people like Herod to side with Herod, who was not only indifferent to suffering, he was obviously comfortable with what we could call collateral damage, the loss of lives, innocent lives, in order to maintain *his* security, *his* comfort, *his* privilege. His kind are still around today, sometimes they can trick us into accepting the same indifference just so we can enjoy some comfort, security, or privilege at the expense of the lives or well-being of others.

Matthew's dark Christmas story shows us Jesus was a refugee, that God is Incarnate with those who have no home. We need to remember this as we welcome those seeking a home from other places, as our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preached in his Christmas sermon.

The Gospel of Matthew's dark Christmas might not seem like the good news of great joy for all people like we heard on Christmas Eve, but in reality, it is. Especially for those who are starting another new year knowing the change of a number in the calendar year isn't going to magically fix any of the problems or sorrows in our lives. Like those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, or those who are dealing with a medical diagnosis that doesn't give much hope, or those struggling to pay their bills, those who are looking for new homes, those whose communities are suffering, those who feel lonely and out of place.

Perhaps the Incarnation, God with us, isn't about getting things in the world's version of the correct order. Maybe it is about God's order, which is being with us in the darkest of times when all the things we might turn to for hope or healing let us down. Maybe the Church is out of sync with the rest of the world on purpose. To remind us no matter what the world throws at us: pandemics, illness, indifference, loss, God is not afraid to be with us in it all. God brings light, healing, hope, forgiveness, and new life into the darkness. And that is good news of great joy for all people. And makes me glad that Christmas, the season of Incarnation, isn't quite over yet.



[Watch a video of Mother Deborah's Sermon HERE.](#)

The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, a Sermon for the Second Sunday after Christmas, January 2, 2022

Please include in your prayers

In our world, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray also for the people who are suffering from war, especially all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

In our diocese, In our diocese, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

In our parish, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, Rev. Katharin Foster and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community. We pray for our friends at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Merida, Mexico.

Those Whom our Prayers are Requested: Belle, Bill S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Elena, Gloria R., Gordon, Jan S, Lacey, Land and baby Rispono, Laura, Miriam, Sharon, Bill, Annie and Kathleen, Tommy, Linda Ahrens, Jeannet Barratt, Danny Cain, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Glinnis Davies, Dick Dean, Phyllis Dean, Richard DeNune, Caryl Docherty, Chris Eaton, Ben Foster, Norm Fox, Jan Gault, Jennifer Hall, Barbara Harnish, Susanne Hill, Nancy and Bob Jackson, Peter Kachenko and family, Monya Monroe, Julie Nehls, Linda Nippert, Lauren O'Brien, Doug and Michelle Parsons, Jane Patton, Dale Paul, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Ann Shelly, Michael Vaughn, Consuelo Walker and family, Emily Woolsey, Canon Bob Wright, Zita Zolpys, and we pray for all who care for them. **

Anniversary: Rev. Deborah Woolsey and Michael Luellhoff (1/7)

Birthdays: Lauren Spero Wiener (1/2), Elizabeth Sayrs (1/4), Bob Shelly (1/5), Sophia Karageorge (1/7), Julie Spero (1/7), Ty Carr (1/8), Carey Busch (1/8)

** Full names for this section are normally not published online but since there is not a printed Sunday Bulletin or in-house 10:30 service, for the time being we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or **grahammowery@aol.com**.

Music

Music for January 2, Christmas 2 – year C 2021

Recorded from Service -- Due to some sort of unknown glitch the music recorded today was not saved properly. We are sorry not to be able to reproduce it here.



Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE-LICENSE.
License #A-708852. All rights reserved.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams via Vimeo its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched later without having to log in.

<https://vimeo.com/event/4306>

Though the doors of the National Cathedral in Washington are, like ours, temporarily closed, there's much to explore at the the Cathedral's online portal.

<https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

This week:

Sunday, January 9, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 12, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting at Julie Nehls

Coming Up:

Sunday, January 16, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Thursday, January 20, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Sunday, January 23, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 26, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting at Julie Nehls

Sunday, January 30, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 30, After Service - - All Parish Annual Meeting

CrossRoads Café will be closed December 20, 2021 - January 8, 2022

Notes

12 Days of Christmas

It's not just a song. The Season of Christmas in the Church Year is 12 days long; beginning on December 25 and lasting until January 6, which is the Feast of the Epiphany. Some time ago, someone came up with Biblical references for each of the 12 Days of Christmas for the song. You might see them on chain mails and on social media saying the references were used to help people remember parts of the Christian catechism. While there is no proof of this, it is still fun to tie the lyrics of the song to the Bible.

Dec. 25 Day 1 Partridge in a Pear Tree = Jesus Christ

Dec. 26 Day 2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments

Dec. 27 Day 3 French Hens = Faith, Hope, and Charity, the theological virtues

Dec. 28 Day 4 Calling Birds = Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

Dec. 29 Day 5 Golden Rings = the first five books of the Old Testament

Dec. 30 Day 6 Geese A-laying = six days of creation

Dec. 31 Day 7 Swans A-Swimming = seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Marriage, Confirmation, Ordination, Reconciliation, Unction/Healing

Jan. 1 Day 8 Maids A-Milking = eight Beatitudes

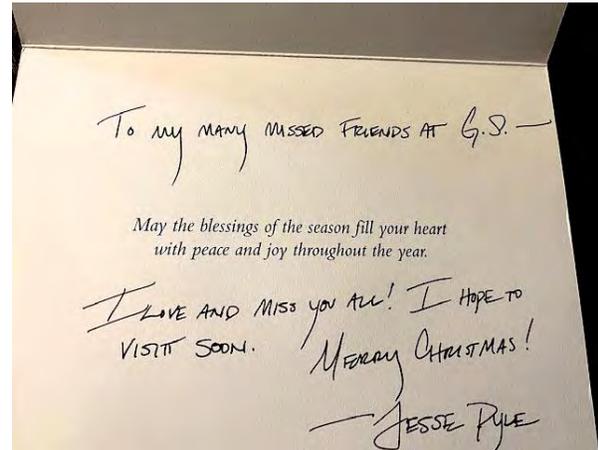
Jan. 2 Day 9 Ladies Dancing = nine fruits of the Holy Spirit

Jan. 3 Day 10 Lords A-Leaping = Ten Commandments

Jan. 4 Day 11 Pipers Piping = eleven faithful disciples

Jan. 5 Day 12 Drummers Drumming = twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles Creed

Christmas Greetings from Jesse Pyle



To my many MISSED FRIENDS AT G.S. —

*May the blessings of the season fill your heart
with peace and joy throughout the year.*

I LOVE AND MISS you ALL! I HOPE TO
VISIT SOON.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

— JESSE PYLE

Congratulations Nadia and Jeffery!

Nadia Yisa-Doko and Jeffery Ugim-Adie were joined in Holy Matrimony Sunday, January 2, 2022 at Church of the Good Shepherd. Mother Deborah celebrated and solemnized the wedding. We wish Nadia and Jeffery all the best as they begin the adventure of marriage.



Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines](#)

Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines for returning to in-person worship](#)

As of August 5 the Diocese COVID Guidelines request all persons wear masks inside the church building regardless of vaccination status.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.,
Monday through Thursday.
Masks are required.

and [Back Issues](#)

[Diocese S Ohio](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal
News Service](#)

[Episcopal Café](#)

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but during office/CrossRoads hours the **thrift shop** and **chapel** are available for individuals.
Masks are required.

CrossRoads Café is only open Sundays after the service until the news school year.

Contact Information

For pastoral needs, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at macbuck@yahoo.com.

For maintenance matters, please leave a note at the office or contact Ted Foster, Junior Warden, at 740-593-8615 or by e-mail at foster.theodore@gmail.com. **For emergencies**, please call The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895.

NON-emergency messages can be left on the church's answering machine (740-593-6877). The parish office administrator is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or barbara@chogs.org.

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
64 University Terrace, Athens OH 45701
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

This takes you to the Parish Home page where you can donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation -- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

Check out the Church's [YouTube Channel](#).

LIKE us on Facebook [Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd 45701](#)

Office Hours:

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday

Masks are required.
