

Karen Hollis
Sermon – Luke 2:8-20
December 25, 2018

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night . . . living in the fields . . . talk about roughing it! We just spent 5 days without power, without water, some without heat . . . we all had a roof over our heads . . . but that is really roughing it – living out, exposed to the elements. Maybe they have a satchel of food with them, a canteen of water. Their whole lives are caring for and protecting the sheep, leading them to green pastures, to sources of water . . . we hear so many echoes of King David this time of year, the King who was blessed by God and brought Israel to greatness . . . sometimes we forget that this is how David began his life, as a shepherd for his father's flock. David was quite connected to his family, but shepherds during Jesus' time live on the margins of society given their poverty and proximity to the city. Their lives, David's life is completely about looking after the sheep, leaving a lot of time for God, listening for God's voice in the wind, in the silence, and within him. David hears God in the field and sings God's praises. Centuries later God still speaks in those fields outside of Bethlehem, to the marginalized, to the meek and lowly. God's messengers come not to the ruling class who feast at fine tables; they come to those who most need to hear the news of the Messiah's birth. "Born this day in the city of David a saviour, who is the Messiah." The angels tell the shepherds that the one who is born is consecrated, set apart for a holy purpose – this babe will grow up to rule in God's name, like King David did. They go with haste, expecting to find a great warrior, who will cleanse the temple, defeat Rome, and bring God's justice to Israel and the world – but the world doesn't yet know who he really is and what his reign will look like.

What was a quiet moment for Joseph and Mary becomes one with visitors with fantastic stories of angels and heavenly hosts, reminding them of their own angelic visitations. As she sits there holding

the baby, listening to the stories of the shepherds, Mary wonders, little one, who will you become? What does life have in store for you? Even Mary cannot imagine.