

Karen Hollis
Sermon – Luke 2:1-14
December 24, 2018 7pm

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.

The power outage has been a challenge. Day one is full of expectation – usually we're only out for 24 hours at the most, so it's coming on any moment, right? We have all the emergency water we need, have cash, the grill is working, I chop some wood. By day 2 the impulse to turn on lights goes away, we have figured out the best way to cook eggs on the grill and were able to gas up the car. By day 3 we are low on water again, we are really longing for a shower, the dishes are stacking up again, the propane tank runs dry . . . and how long will it be before the power is back on? I thought a lot about Mary and Joseph over the past few days as I camped inside my house. They know nothing of electricity or running water, but their lives and expectations are oriented to a life that is set up to move with the rhythms of day and night. They spend their days living. I find it quite a challenge to do everything I need to live and prepare for Christmas services. But Mary and Joseph are used to this: daily living and vocation. Even with Mary close to her due date, they know how to do life. But with the census, they have to travel . . . how many days are they on the road? Where will they stay along the way? Will there be a place to stay when they get there? The town is full of visitors for the census. Where could they find food after the long journey? Water, warmth . . . small comforts for Mary . . . they could only carry so much on a donkey and they are not able to enjoy the good graces of hospitality. It's hard to not be able to rely on our norms, especially when it isn't our choice . . . even more when we have no warning . . . and we don't know how long it will last.

In the midst of life's challenges, God comes in the miracle of birth: a newborn baby. And everyone stops and for a moment forgets everything else, captivated by his presence, as we are with all newborns: his eyes looking around, the tiniest fingers and toes, he yawns, hiccups, sticks his hand in his mouth and we all laugh. Little one, we just can't take our eyes off of you.

What was a busy, intense journey, hours of labour and fussing over the birth, becomes a quiet, holy inhale of the immensity of this moment. This is what the prophets of old have expressed for centuries . . . the promise of this place, the holy city of King David, where he with the blessing of God, helped Israel flourish. This is the fruit of the independent and authentic expressions of yes from both Mary and Joseph. Here in this holy city, within this modest dwelling, with these humble people, everything comes together . . . and the sky comes alive with choirs of Gloria in excelsis! Praise to God . . . for he . has . come!