

"FINDING OUR VOICES"

Isaiah 9:2-7 Luke 2: 1-20

December 24, 2018 Christmas Eve

York Center Church of the Brethren

Pastor Christy Waltersdorff

When I was a kid I really wanted to believe the Christmas legend that at the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve the animals could speak in human voices praising God. Even though I knew it couldn't possibly happen, I really liked believing that it could. At midnight on Christmas Eve we were always leaving the candlelight service at church. I would beg my parents to let me stay home so I could go back to the barn and eavesdrop on our sheep and horse at midnight. They just gave me "the look" and told me to get in the car.

I don't recall ever wanting to step into the chicken houses at midnight and wait for our chickens to speak. Maybe after hearing 13,000 chickens cluck all day long, the thought of hearing them all speak at the same time was more than I could bear. But I really wanted to hear our horse, *Gypsy*, talk to the sheep. And maybe our dog, *Mickey*, would speak up too.

Marty and I have two dogs and I know that if *Sophie* and *Rosie*, could suddenly speak they would say, "Open the refrigerator! We are sooo hungry!" And our cats, *Tux* and *Sparkle*, would talk only when they felt like it.

So much for Christmas Eve miracles, or is it? Maybe the miracle of Christmas Eve isn't that the animals will find their voices, but that we will. Over 2,000 years ago a baby was born in a barn in a middle of nowhere little town to parents who were on the bottom of the social ladder. His birth didn't get much attention that night, except from some shepherds on the hills outside of town.

But here we are-- celebrating his birth. Here we are, living our lives as though his birth and his life mattered. The way in which we live our lives says quite a bit about what we believe happened in Bethlehem so many years ago. Worshiping in this place on Christmas Eve isn't just a nice tradition for us- it is a way of life; it is an affirmation of our faith.

Two thousand years ago Mary and Joseph risked everything to bring Jesus safely into this world. Although he was God incarnate, to them, he was just their baby boy. They loved him, they raised him, and then they let him go. And he went out into the world and changed everything.

So here we are. On this holy night the world isn't waiting for the animals to speak- the world is waiting for us to speak. And speak we must- of the great and Gracious God we worship; of the love and mercy of Jesus Christ; of the fellowship and love we have found in this congregation.

We speak of Jesus not only with our words, but also with our lives. So let us go forth from this place of worship and speak of the love and mercy of Jesus by all that we say and all that we do.

We have been blessed. Let us be a blessing to others.

Thanks be to God. Jesus is born!

Amen.