

December 30, 2019 Huntley UMC weekly email

Dear friends,

On Christmas Eve we heard once again the old, old story of our Savior's birth. The baby nestled in the straw of a manger flanked by Mary and Joseph and surrounded by the animals. The angels of God are singing in the heavens and the shepherds are rejoicing in the fields. The wise men are traveling from afar, faithfully following the star, and bearing gifts fit for a king.

Yesterday in worship at Huntley United Methodist Church, we heard the other side of that story. It is the story of a king who finds out from the wise men that a new king has been born. This king pretends to welcome the news, but secretly plots to wipe out this perceived threat to his rule. He goes so far as to slaughter the innocents, all male children two years and younger in the area of the birth, just to be sure. But God intervenes, and the Holy family flees for their very lives, and find refuge in a foreign land.

As we make this shift in the story of Christmas, we have to confront the reason why it was necessary for the Savior to be sent in the first place. The angel told us way back in the very beginning of the story that the reason for Jesus' birth was to save us from our sins.

We live in a sinful, broken world that is in rebellion to God. And sin is ugly, and rebellion causes so much pain and suffering in our world. We are not even out of December yet, and we run smack into the dark side of Christmas. Christ entered the human experience in order to save us, and that truth is the most profound truth of all.

It is a huge burden to be human. To be human is to experience all kinds of hurts and pain and abuse. The human experience is touched by struggle and hardship, pain and suffering, poverty and homelessness, injury, illness and death. Christ came both to experience that pain and ultimately deliver humanity from that pain. The stark reality of this beautiful story is the huge price God had to pay to redeem us. And when we realize the depth of God's love for us, the story of Christmas becomes more beautiful than ever.

Huntley United Methodist church Board will meet on Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.

Huntley Community Blood Drive will be held at Huntley UMC on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.

See you in worship,  
Pastor Gary Geiman