

PASTOR ED'S PONDERINGS



"Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place which the Lord has made know to us." (Luke 2:15)

Dear Friends,

With those words the shepherds were invited on a journey that would change their lives forever. It would be a journey that would bring them face to face with their God. In that meeting they would come to see God in a new way, see themselves in a new way, they would hear a call to live in a new way. They would see hope when others saw darkness. They would persist in mercy in the midst of merciless places. They would see life before them as a continual journey of learning and leaning on Emmanuel; God with us. Each year, we are invited to join the journey anew. It is a journey to which all are invited, none are forced. Will you join the journey this year? The poet Ann Weems writes:

*In each heart lies a Bethlehem, an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.*

When we are Bethlehem-bound we experience our own advent in his.

*When we are Bethlehem-bound we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars not hearing angel voices.*

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

*This Advent let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that the Lord has made
known to us. Let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.*

Through the tinsel let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

*In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for brush of angel's wings.*

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem and find our kneeling places.

This Advent at Grove Ave. UMC you are being asked to come on the journey of Advent; a time of preparation. Our worship theme: *Journey to Bethlehem* will follow each week along with our Advent Study, Adam Hamilton's *The Journey; Walking the Road to Bethlehem* we will explore that first Advent so long ago and open ourselves to our own Advent Journey. Adam tells us the purpose of his book, "...the stories very familiarity may keep us from fully grasping its riches. We think, "Well, yes, I know that story," as its depth and nuance escape us. . . the purpose of this book is to explore the story of Jesus' birth with fresh eyes and ears. "You are invited to come and join us on the journey. That we might make room in our soul anew for a Savior, who is Christ the Lord! Are you willing to come on the journey? Through it God can bring new life to you!

God's Blessings,

Pastor Ed