



December 23, 2018

“Keep Awake” - An Advent Message

"Keep awake." Good advice for pastors and longtime church members. It still surprises me, the revelations that come about the Christmas story. I've read it so often I sometimes have very little confidence that I will learn anything new. And then, when I least expect it, there it is. That has become more common as my ministry requires me to travel places far beyond my home. It was true for the Christmas characters as well who traveled well beyond theirs.

Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to pay taxes. The shepherds were away from home working in the fields when the angels came. Even the angels had to leave their home in heaven. And eventually some foreign wise men, who got lost in their travels, found the Christ child in Bethlehem. The only thing these diverse characters have in common is that none of them was home for the Christmas miracle.

By contrast, who missed the miracle? Caesar the emperor and Quirinius the governor of Syria. Herod the king also missed the miracle, even though he heard the child was born. Herod's priests and scribes missed it, even though they knew Christ would be born in Bethlehem. And the innkeeper missed the miracle, even though it was happening in his backyard. The reason they all missed the miracle was they stayed safely at home.

As the story goes, the only people who see the miracle of salvation, redemption and transformation are those who know they are not in the right place. I'm not saying you need to leave home physically for the holidays. I AM saying that you need to leave the life that is comfortable, but not in the right place.

This year, when you're acutely aware you and the world are not in the right place, you are now ready to leave the home you've built for yourself to find your true home with the family of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Mother, Daughter, Sustainer.

Because the miracle of the Christmas story is that even God became homeless to find a home in you.

May it be so with all the blessings of God,

Bill (Rev. William P. Worley, PSEC Conference Minister)

Forming a New Christian Education Community of Practice

All Christian Educators, Pastors, Teachers, Sunday School Superintendents, and anyone interested in Christian Faith

Formation are welcome to join a new Christian Education Community of Practice. While the face of Christian Education changes along with the face of church, the mission remain the same- share the stories of our faith as we continue to teach the Good News of Jesus Christ and His message to love God and love each other. Strengthening our Christian Educators is one way to complete that mission. One way to strengthen our Christian Educators is to gather together to share and learn from each other.

These gatherings will be facilitated and lead by Betsy Majewski, Commissioned Minister of Christian Education in the Covenant Association. Betsy is a 2012 graduate of Lancaster Theological Seminary where she received a Master of Arts in Religion degree. Betsy has many years of both volunteer and professional experience in CE, most recently as the former Minister of Christian Education at Good Shepherd UCC (Tuckerton) and former Director of Children's Faith Formation at Immanuel UCC (Shillington).

The group will meet at Calvary UCC, 640 Centre Ave, Reading. All meetings will be Saturday mornings 9:30-11:30 am. We'll meet about once a month beginning January 19, 2019, with the topic of Lent. On February 16, 2019, we'll look at Vacation Bible School curricula and discuss how to select the best one for your program. Other possible topics for later meetings are listed below. Suggested topics from participants are not only welcome but encouraged.

Using Multiple Intelligence in Christian Education
Rotation Workshop Model for Sunday School
Ideas for Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter
Intergenerational Sunday School
Doing Children's Sermons
Games for Sunday School
Rally Day ideas
Celebrating Thanksgiving
Advent Resources

Other dates for meetings are:

March 16, April 13, May 18, June 8, August 3, September 21, October 19 and November 16

Any questions can be addressed to Betsy at bmajewski10@aol.com