

Sermon Title: **Shepherds living in the fields**

Bible: Luke 2:1-20 (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Where & When: Christmas Eve Service at Gilroy UMC on Dec. 24th, 2019

Audience: about 50 English-speaking Church Members

### **Opening Prayer**

Emmanuel. God is with us. You came to earth as a human to be with us. Today, we want to remember your love and your peace. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **1. The First Christmas**

What is the perfect Christmas? What does the perfect Christmas look like? What or whom do you need for a perfect Merry Christmas? A Christmas Tree? A lot of Christmas Gifts? Joyful Carols? Family gathering? Children and grandchildren, or great grandchildren?

As we read the Gospel of Luke, the very first Christmas was not the perfect Christmas. Joseph was just a stranger. Bethlehem was Joseph's hometown, but it seems like nobody remembered Joseph. Furthermore, there was no place for Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. The manger was the place for the child. There was no mention of the three kings in the Gospel of Luke. So sad. No three kings? This means that there were no Christmas gifts. The very first Christmas was neither a perfect nor a joyful Christmas.

### **2. Shepherds living in the fields**

However, somehow, the Lord sent the angels to invite shepherds to this very first Christmas. Was this good news to Mary and Joseph? Or more trouble? Shepherds were living in the fields and keeping watch over their flocks by night. Who are shepherds today? Maybe the homeless. Maybe those police or firefighters who are on duty, even on Christmas Eve. Maybe those families that you cannot invite, because they live far away. Who are your shepherds?

At the first Christmas, the Lord sent the angels as messengers to share the good news. I believe, today, the Lord gives us the smartphone, because the Lord wants to use us as messengers, instead of the angels. There is a nativity photo booth in the fellowship hall with the props. Please take joyful photos and send them to your shepherds. What matters is not Christmas gifts, not Christmas trees, but the presence and the smiles of your loved ones, right? Merry Christmas to all of you. And Merry Christmas to your shepherds!

### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, like the angels, please guide us to bring the good news to the shepherds. Please use us to make Merry Christmas to all the people. In Jesus' name. Amen!