

(Breath). We're here.

There's so much that goes into those 31 days or so following Thanksgiving Day. The holiday parties, the extra work put in to prepare our time away from the office, the planning and cooking and scheduling for parties, and events, and themed offerings, the gift purchasing, the outreach work done, the plane tickets bought, the suitcases packed, so on and so on.

And now.

My freneticism has been around this Advent season has been around writing five different sermons for the Blue Christmas, Advent 4, the Kid friendly Christmas Eve service, tomorrow's Christmas Day service, and of course tonight's. And generally they've been fun, and energetic and I've felt like I'm at a Christmas party drinking spiked egg nog for each of them.

But tonight. Tonight's is different.

The energy we've all put in to plan our Christmases and to make the most of them, I see that sort of energy in the Christmas story we hear tonight. That same stress and excitement and worry and work that went into Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem to find a place to have their baby witnessed and attended by shepherds and angels, and to celebrate the joy of the messiah's birth.

It's awesome, all of it, and all of the energy you've put into making this December the 24th what it is. But there's a line from our Christmas story that feels so especially strong at 11:00pm or so tonight as we sit in this beautiful, wooden house of worship and community to celebrate the savior's birth. And it's this sentence, comfortably almost at the end of our reading, which comes after the joy of Christ's birth is spread by the shepherds:

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

There's something so quiet and so holy about remembering that for all of this. For all the hubbub of ages past, for the weight upon Jesus' shoulders name by John's Gospel which we'll read tomorrow morning that Jesus was in the beginning, for the thousands of years of Christmases celebrated in this child's honor and the billions who have related to Christ, for alllllll that.

Mary holds this moment of her firstborn's birth. A moment which is hers and hers alone, despite all that came before and all that would follow.

And it's always so cool to me that the midnight Christmas Eve service does so a good job of instilling, at least in me and I hope in you, that silent stillness that Mary had and which we get to have too.

Each of us live busy lives with meaning and relationships. There's a lot that happens. But on this silent night of Christmas... Mary's triumph in the birth of her son calls us to the triumphant stillness of our lives. For just a moment, close your eyes. And think to who you are. In relation to your life. In relation to God. Rest for just a moment in yourself and who God has called you to be. Do you feel the good? That is the divine spark which Mary held as she pondered the words about her son and who this life was to which she gave birth.

Life comes calling, as early as tomorrow, maybe even as early as tonight for some of you. You'll be called to family or to work or to bills or to write a sermon for the first Sunday after Christmas.

But take the good that is in you. Ponder it in your heart for tonight if you can and let it be a warmth for you in the days to come. You might forget about it for a while, in the flurry of life. But that's why we come back every year. To remember that it's still there. That good is in you every day. But tonight, let's rest for a moment in the manger. Let's behold the newborn Christ, and look upon him in this space together as we also warm ourselves with that light of Christ within us. Amen.