

**Christmas Eve Sermon**  
**Luke 2:1-20**  
**By The Rev. Alfredo Feregrino**  
**St. Luke's ~ San Lucas Episcopal Church**  
**Date: December 24, 2025**

As I was ready to write a reflection on this scripture, I came to the conclusion that it is so challenging to preach on the birth narratives especially when we as preachers have to do it year after year.

The Nativity story is so well known and so beloved that hearing it again and again can make us miss its power, it can make us miss its depth.

And yet, as I was reading Luke's account of the Nativity over and over again, I was puzzled by one specific verse. "*there was no place for them in the inn*"

This specific verse has probably been one of the most used in Luke's account to inspire the Christian imagination over the centuries.

This specific verse: "*there was no place for them in the inn*", has inspired thousands of Christmas sermons, liturgies, paintings and songs.

This specific verse has inspired generations of poets, musicians and artists, trying to comprehend the mystery contained in this brief phrase; trying to comprehend the mystery that embraces the Christmas event.

In this Nativity account Luke does not give us any more details except that there is no place for Joseph and Mary in the inn. Luke the gospel writer offers no explanation. He simply states the fact and moves on.

We can just imagine - we can only presume to imagine - the unfolding scene around this specific verse.

We can imagine Joseph and Mary so tired and exhausted from traveling the dusty roads in the extreme, intense desert heat on their way to the city of David, called Bethlehem, to fulfill what the prophet Micah once proclaimed:

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrata, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you. (Micah 5-2)*

We can only presume to imagine how tired Joseph and Mary were after walking a substantial distance on foot.

They probably had a donkey, as a way of transportation . . . but we will never know: Luke never mentioned a donkey in his account.

The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem is a little over 90 miles—about the same as traveling from Vancouver to Olympia.

Even for our modern standards to complete such a journey on foot would take a few days.

We can only presume to imagine Joseph and Mary arriving in the desolate town of Bethlehem at night, under a dark sky filled with shining stars, dogs barking in the distance, and the gentle sound of crickets all around them as they approached the inn.

We only know by Luke's account that when they arrived that "*there was no place for them in the inn.*"

No place for a poor couple.

No place for a young woman about to give birth.

No place for the child who is Emmanuel, God-with-us.

But despite the images we often have of the Christmas scene, we cannot take Luke's account too far beyond what he actually gives us.

And Luke is so brief in describing the birth of Jesus.

We just know that while Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.

Yes, Luke does not give us more details, we are not told why there was no place for them in the inn,

So, what was the message that Luke is trying to convey when he mentioned that "*there was no place for them in the inn*"?

The message here is not about discomfort or inconvenience. This is a message about exclusion, about doors quietly being closed. About the Messiah entering the world without a welcome.

We know this sentence all too well. We know what it means to be rejected. We know what it means to be told there is "no place."

No place for the poor in safe housing. No place for migrants and refugees seeking shelter. No place for the elderly who are forgotten. No place for the sick who feel invisible. No place for those whose lives do not fit into our systems or expectations.

"*There was no place for them in the inn.*" This is not only a line from Scripture.

It is a sentence that our world still speaks.

And yet—this is where the Gospel turns—God does not wait for a place to be made.

God does not wait for a space to be prepared. God does not wait for perfect conditions.

God does not act by forcing open the doors of the inn or by rearranging the empire. Instead, God enters the world precisely where there is no place.

God chooses the manger. God chooses the margins. God chooses to be born where the world says, “Not here.”

God always makes a way.

Perhaps this verse, “*there was no place for them in the inn,*” can be read also as a parable of the human soul.

A mirror reflecting our own lives.

How often have we closed ourselves off to the possibilities of welcoming God?

How often have we been too busy, too distracted, too certain that there is no room for God?

And yet, the good news proclaimed this night is that God comes anyway.

God comes to meet us where we least expect—

in the ordinary, the overlooked, the unfinished places of our lives.

God comes even when we fail to notice, even when we hesitate to open the door.

But also, it is true that God makes a way and comes to meet us every time we make room—when we make a room for a neighbor, for the unhoused, for the immigrant, for someone who has been turned away—

When the shepherds hear the angel’s message, they take the initiative. They go. They search. They make room by moving toward where God has chosen to dwell.

So, I wonder,

Can we do the same?

Can we open our doors—our hearts, our lives—and go where God comes to us?

Can we say, with sincere hospitality, “*Mi casa es tu casa. I have many rooms. Come and stay with me.*”

Can we dare to say, “There is a place for you here”?

I wonder...

One of the early theologians once said,

“*God became human so that humanity might become like God.*”

This is the invitation for Christmas.

So tonight—today—we can say to the Christ child, to the baby Jesus:

Come.

We have been waiting for you.

You are welcome here.

And in saying these words, we may discover that the place God was seeking all along was not the inn... but us.

**Amen.**

**A note from the preacher:**

*Because sermons are meant to be preached and therefore prepared with emphasis on verbal presentation (i.e., are written for the ear), the written accounts occasionally deviate from proper and generally accepted principles of grammar and punctuation. Most often, these deviations are not mistakes per se, but are indicative of an attempt to aid the listener in the delivery of the sermon.*