



December 25, 2005

Preaching: Ronni Sue Verboom

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY

Luke 2:8-14

“And the angels sang”

Have you noticed that many older churches, often the smallish ones, are no longer being used as houses of worship? They are often made into antique shops or little specialty boutiques.

Sometimes this bothers me. It just feels **WRONG** somehow.

The one time I didn't feel this was in a small town in Wisconsin where a church building had been re-cycled as a “Christmas” store- selling Christmas-themed items all year round.

Why didn't that bother me? Perhaps because Christmas IS after all, a central moment in our faith. The Christmas events tell the good news of Jesus Christ, and **THAT** is the mission of the church.

I treasure a story told by John Killinger, in which he describes this same kind of shop. He was out in Washington state in the summertime, and tickled to find the store. On the front door, where no one could miss it, was a neatly lettered sign. It said, “Christmas Spoken Here.” And he realized, in a flash, what a perfect slogan for the church!

Christmas Spoken Here.

Have you ever thought of Christmas as something that is “spoken”- Christmas as a “message”? It IS, you know.

At Christmas God's WORD was made flesh, and came to live with us, to be one of us. God spoke in a language we could understand:

-A NEWBORN BABY- Flesh of our flesh, of our own nature- WE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.

-A LIFE OF LOVING DEEDS- WE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.

-A LIFE that condemned selfishness, arrogance, egotism and superiority- WE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.

-A LIFE focused on justice: that SAW the UNSEEN, that FOUND the LOST, that LOVED the UNLOVED, that INCLUDED the EXCLUDED- WE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.

-A LIFE that was LAID DOWN for EVERYONE, good and bad alike- though it seems noble beyond our imagining..... still we CAN, we DO UNDERSTAND THAT.

Christmas speaks to us in life's loneliness saying, "You are not alone. I am with you. I love you, forgive you and will remain with you always. I will preserve your life through eternity and will re-unite you with all those you love. We will sing, feast and dance in everlasting celebration."

THAT'S what "Christmas Spoken Here" is all about.

CHRISTMAS is spoken most fluently, perhaps, through music.

That may be why we associate Christmas so closely with the songs and carols of the season. Music has been called the "universal language". Messages of hope are woven together through notes and tones and lyrics.

Angels speak to people throughout the Bible, but when the angels are MOST filled with God's Spirit, they don't TALK. They SING. To express the message of Christmas most eloquently, they sing.... And so do we.

God has come bringing TRUTH, JUSTICE, FORGIVENESS, MERCY, SALVATION. Share that good news! Christmas IS spoken here. And that's why we sing!