



A Christmas Invitation

Let me be the first to admit: I know next to nothing about technology. As I have been reminded time and time again, I am a dinosaur when it comes to the world of electronic – anything. With each passing day of technological progress, I find myself being left further and further behind in the paleolithic dust. We live in a world where information about anything is just a fingertip away. Google is no longer just a company name. It has become a verb. Want to know about the history of basket weaving? Just “google” it. Want to know how to make blueberry, banana stuffed pancakes? Just “google” it. Want to know the population of Kalamazoo? Just “google” it. Want to know about God? Just “google” it. Really?

So, why would anyone choose to come to a large brick building late on a Monday night or early on Christmas morning asking about that one story from 2,000 years ago; the one story that tells of “a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes?” Just “google” it. I’m sure all the information one needs to learn about that story is there.

Is it possible that we gather together at those odd times because “googling” the story isn’t enough? Is it possible that in coming together to hear the story of angels and shepherds we experience a shared communal story that holds us together with a promise of meaning and a message of hope? Are their fears our fears? Their struggles our struggles? Their reception of a promise, our reception of a promise?

As wonderful as information technology is, it doesn’t create a safe space in which we gather on a cold December evening; a space to bring our joys, our sorrows, our celebrations, and our fears; Information technology doesn’t create a safe space in which we can ask our questions that can’t be answered by a google search. We need a safe space in which to raise the questions that can’t be answered by smart phones and tablets.

For me, the story of Jesus is a reminder of how the One I call Lord and Savior was born, lived, and executed in poverty. For me the story of Jesus is a reminder that the One I choose to follow was labeled “criminal” by those in authority around him. For me, the story of Jesus is one of questioning authority and breaking down barriers that divide us; The story of Jesus is one in which I am not only commanded to love my enemies, and to feed the hungry, but am convicted when I fail to do so. For me the story of Jesus is a reminder that the One who created everything in existence, the One we call “Almighty” can come among us on a silent night in a faraway village in the birth of tiny baby. For me the story of Jesus

embraces me and calls me to be grounded in love; grounded in the angel of my better nature. For me, this is the story I need to hear on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas morning. But not only do I need to hear this story for myself, I need to hear it with you, my sisters and my brothers; A long invitation to a simple of service of Christmas love.

Peace and love,

Pastor Doug