

# Watchnight 2020

## West Kirk of Calder

By: Rev Dr Nanda Groenewald

Reading: Luke 2:8-20

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### **Bible reading: Luke 2:8-20**

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## **A Christmas Poem,**

by Josephine Neill

A caald winter's nicht  
Starn heich in the lift  
A lass wi a bairnie  
Ahint a snaa drift.

Come in through the byre  
Step ower the straw  
Draw ben tae the fire  
Afore the day daw.

The bairnie will sleep  
By the peat's puttrin flame  
Oor waarmin place, lassie,  
This nicht is your hame.

Come morning the snaa  
Showed nae fuitprints at aa  
Tho the lass wi the bairnie  
Had stolen awaa.

An we mynded anither  
A lang while afore  
Wi a bairn in her airms  
An the beasts roun the door.

## Reflection

In a short while we will be celebrating that wee bairn's birth. A wee bairn who most probably wasn't born on a cold, snowy night, in the bleak midwinter – but that is OUR reality of this time of year. A time when it is cold and dark outside, and what better way to warm our hearts than to be reminded that Jesus, the light of the world, was born for us.

This wee bairn's birth, although it was a very simple and plain affair, was **big** news right from the start. It was announced to his mum by an angel. And after his birth, this good news was announced to the shepherds by a whole host of angels.

Big news, announced in a big way. By ANGELS.

But... What is an angel? An angel is a messenger of God. In those days, before Jesus was born, God sent angels to share important news with his people, to show important things to his people, to change their lives.

What a shame that God doesn't send angels to earth anymore... But, doesn't he? I've never seen an angel with bright, shiny white robes and feathery wings... But... does that *really* mean that God doesn't send angels to earth anymore?

In Hebrews 13:2 we read: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to **angels** without knowing it."

Angels are God's messengers. They bring important news, they do important things, they change people's lives. And you know, if that is the definition of an angel, I have certainly met more than 1 in my life. Have you?

Have you met someone who's changed your life? Even in a very small way?

Well... Then you might just have met an angel. An ordinary angel, dressed in ordinary clothes, doing ordinary things – but in the way God expects his children to act.

And who knows, maybe you have *been* an angel to someone? We don't need halo's and wings to spread God's love through what we do and say. All we need is faith, and the willingness to live it.

So this Christmas, let's notice all the angels around us, and thank God not only for saving us through his son, but also for surrounding us with his messengers every single day.

Amen

### **I once had a visit from an Angel,**

by Rev Tom Gordon:

I once had a visit from an angel  
She'd trudged all the way down the street  
to my house,  
through two feet of snow, in the depths of the winter,  
to bring me my mail.  
I was waiting for an important message.  
She thought of herself only as  
'The local Postie'.  
But I knew better.

I once had a visit from an angel.  
He'd come all the way across town  
to my house,

to see me when I was sick, the only one who bothered.

He brought me a bottle of whisky

'We'll finish that together when you feel better.'

He thought of himself only as

'Your mate, Billy'.

But I knew differently.

I once had a visit from an angel.

He'd come all the way from next door

to my house,

to ask if I was OK, with Christmas coming up soon,

and me missing Annie so much.

I enjoyed his quiet company - I always do.

He thought of himself only as

'Freddie from number 23'.

But I knew much more.

I once had a visit from an angel.

She'd phoned, and then come round

to my house,

to give me a break, and walk the dog,

and take the kids to the playpark,

because she knew I was struggling to cope.

She thought of herself only as

'Your little sister, Vera'.

But I knew the truth.

I once had a visit from an angel -

all the way from wherever angels come from,

to my house,

to bring a message and leave a gift,

to offer reassurance and help me to cope.

But there was always more than that.

They thought of themselves as

'Just being me'.

But I know an angel when I meet one."