News from the Brick

Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren
5352 N. Brick Church Road
Hagerstown, IN 47346

Established 1820

Carol M. Pfeiffer, Pastor
Church Phone: 765-489-4430
Parsonage Phone: 765-489-3435
nettlecreekcob@tmcsmail.com
www.nettlecreekcob.com

Eloise Beeson, Secretary
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Worship: 10:00 a.m.

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Continuing the Work of Jesus.
Peacefully. Simply. Together.

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Carol's Comments **"Why the Shepherds?"**

Luke 2:8-20 NRV 8 *In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their*
flock by night. 9 *Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and*
they were terrified. 10 *But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of*
great joy for all the people: 11 *to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*
12 *This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'* 13 *And*
suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14 *'Glory to God in*
the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!' 15 *When the angels had left them and gone*
into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken
place, which the Lord has made known to us.' 16 *So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the*
child lying in the manger. 17 *When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;*
18 *and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.* 19 *But Mary treasured all these words and*
pondered them in her heart. 20 *The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and*
seen, as it had been told them.

Ever wonder about the shepherds out there on the hillside watching their sheep? They were in charge of the sheep. They took them out to the pastures to feed. The shepherd held a subordinate position. The office of the eastern shepherd, as described in the Bible, was attended with much hardship, and even danger. He was exposed to the extremes of heat and cold, (Genesis 31:40) his food frequently consisted of the precarious supplies afforded by nature, such as the fruit of the "sycamore" or Egyptian fig, (Amos 7:14) the "husks" of the carob tree, (Luke 15:16) and perchance the locusts and wild honey which supported the Baptist, (Matthew 3:4) he had to encounter the attacks of wild beasts, occasionally of the larger species, such as lions, panthers and bears, (1 Samuel 17:34; Isaiah 31:4; Jeremiah 5:6; Amos 5:12) nor was he free from the risk of robbers or predators hordes. (Genesis 31:39) To meet these various foes the shepherd's equipment consisted of the following articles: a mantle, made probably of sheep skin with the fleece on, which he turned inside out in cold weather, as implied in the comparison in (Jeremiah 43:12) (cf. Juv. xiv. 187.); a scrip or wallet, containing a small amount of food (1 Samuel 17:40) a sling, which is still the favorite weapon of the Bedouin shepherd, (1 Samuel 17:40) and lastly, a staff served the double purpose of a weapon against foes and a crook for the management of the flock. (1 Samuel 17:40; Psalms 23:4; Zechariah 11:7 (http://bible.crosswalk.com/Dictionaries/SmithsBibleDictionary/smt.cgi)

This was the life of the shepherds.

Shepherds…looked upon as lowly persons. Shepherds…leading a life of hardship and danger. Shepherds, the gentle, compassionate ones…they were the ones to whom that the angel first appeared, not the elite class of people. Why? Why would the birth of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Savior, be announced to these shepherds? Perhaps because their life was so filled with compassion and caring that they could hear the message. They were the protectors of the flock. While the sheep grazed they had time to contemplate life…think about God...to wonder about the Messiah.

The appearance of the angel terrified them as it would any of us. But these were shepherds used to challenges of the wild. They had surely felt fear before. Yet this was different. The words, "Do not be afraid," were immediately spoken, for they had to **get past their fear** before they could hear any news. They were