



## Most People Missed This

*TEXT*  
*Luke 2:1-20*

December 27, 2020 — Sermon by Rev. Tom Are, Jr.

I'm glad you are here ...  
you need to see this.

*Oh, little town of Beth-  
lehem, how still we see  
thee lie!*

*Above thy deep and  
dreamless sleep the silent  
stars go by.*

*Yet in thy dark street shi-  
neth the everlasting light;*

*The hopes and fears of all  
the years are met in thee tonight.*

The older I get, the more I  
love that hymn about blessed  
Bethlehem. Maybe it's because  
I've been there and can imag-  
ine the humanness of it all.

But there is an oddness to  
this story.

What's odd is that given  
how important this birth is,  
what you see before us ... the  
scripture says these are really  
the only ones to pay attention.  
In the whole world, just fright-  
ened and confused parents,  
some nameless shepherds, and  
magi who have shown up with  
very impractical gifts.

Heaven, on the other hand,  
is having a party because the  
love of God has taken on skin,  
and the whole of the heavenly  
host knows that this means  
God can't bear to be away from  
God's creation. It should give  
us pause that something hap-  
pens that causes all of heaven

to rejoice, but we don't even  
notice.

The world largely ignores  
this child. Too busy with I  
don't know what, whatever it  
is that consumes us when we  
don't have time for God.

The way the story said it,  
there was no room for them in  
the inn.

But it wasn't just the inn.  
There was no room for this  
family, no room for this child.

I find that shocking, but I  
doubt it would surprise Jesus a  
bit, when later in his life Mary  
opens up the baby book and  
he sees he's in a manger, with  
animals nudging him one way  
or another to get a little straw  
to eat.

You would think the world  
would want to take care of ev-  
ery baby, and particularly this  
baby. This is the love of God  
resting in manger straw.

Knowing this is how holy  
love is treated in this world,  
you would think God might just  
call the whole thing off, forget  
the whole idea.

But evidently God just  
can't stay away. The clearest  
thing Jesus will teach us about  
God is that God is love ... and  
love doesn't let go.

He was born because God  
loves the world ... loves you. I

guess when you love like that,  
you just take your place in the  
manger and wait for the world  
you love to notice.

He was willing to take any  
place this world would allow.

This night it was a manger.  
Imagine how joyous he will  
be when *you* stop and notice  
and make a little room for him  
yourself. Make room for him,  
I would say, in your heart ...  
because that's what we say.

But a better way to say it:  
Make room for him to shape  
your choices, to shape your  
relationships.

*We hear the Christmas an-  
gels the great glad tidings tell;*

*O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel!*

It sounds like a prayer: *O  
come to us, abide with us.*

But it's not a prayer you  
need to offer, for He has come,  
and most of the world missed  
it.

So, I'm so glad you are here  
today to pay attention.

**This sermon was delivered at  
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The sermon can be read, heard or  
seen on the church's website: [http://  
www.villagepres.org/current-ser-  
mon-sermon-archives.html](http://www.villagepres.org/current-sermon-sermon-archives.html).