

Christmas Morning 2025

By God's Grace may I speak in the name of the God who was and is and is to come. Amen.

Do not be afraid!

That's how the angels greet the shepherds as they are about to share with them the news of baby Jesus in a manger.

Do not be afraid!

In the story of how Jesus was born there are angels telling various people important news at various points, like when an angel tells Mary she will have a baby who will be the Son of God and she should call him Jesus. And each time an angel suddenly appears to people like that, the angel tells them:

Do not be afraid!

Being afraid is a very human experience, we all have things we are afraid of, small or great. The world can be a pretty scary place at times. The news or simply the realities we deal with on a daily basis can be pretty scary.

Do not be afraid!

There is comfort and hope in these words. Do not be afraid, it's going to be ok. To Mary, do not be afraid, you are going to be ok. To the shepherds, do not be afraid, there is good news for you:

To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

God has not forgotten about you, about the world and all the pain and suffering. God is not going to fix it all with a magic wand, as we would sometimes wish, but God is not leaving us alone and abandoned. God comes to us. God becomes one of us and is born of Mary. God becomes one of us, vulnerably and needy as an infant. God becomes one of us, experiencing joy, pain and fear with us. God becomes one of us telling us, we are not alone in our fears. God is here with us. God comes into this messy world with us. Not to wave a magic wand and fix it all at the snap of a finger, but instead to share life with us, to bring us comfort and hope.

Do not be afraid!

That baby in the manger is very special. That baby Jesus will grow up, and the grown-up Jesus will continue with what has started at his birth, where smelly shepherds and dignified magi were welcomed at his manger. The grown-up Jesus will share meals with the rich and the powerful, but, often to their discomfort, he will also eat with the outcasts, the poor, those on the margins, the ones with questionable characters and the untouchables. Jesus will speak of God's unconditional love for all and of God's Kingdom of peace and justice, where all will have a safe home and all they need to live a

dignified life. And no one will make them afraid anymore. Jesus also will tell people that this kingdom starts small and grows slowly into something strong and powerful. And we can be part of it. By choosing gentleness instead of violence, curiosity instead of prejudice, listening instead of shouting, generosity instead of greed, care instead of indifference, courage instead of fear.

Do not be afraid!

No matter what we face, God is with us, God has become one of us human beings, to be near us, to understand our vulnerabilities and fears. And to show us a way of living that slowly builds a world where fear holds less and less power, as we choose one day at a time gentleness instead of violence, curiosity instead of prejudice, listening instead of shouting, generosity instead of greed, care instead of indifference and courage instead of fear.

Do not be afraid!

Because today Jesus was born, God is with us.

Amen.