

"The Good Shepherd"
Third Sunday of Advent
December 16, 2018
by Rebecca Enney

This morning let's start by standing over here for just a moment, so you can see the meadow up above, where the sheep are in their meadow. But look! The shepherd is not there! And one of the sheep is gone!

Christmas is a time of NO WORRY, right? NOPE! Worries come anyway, no matter what time of year it is. People we love get sick, the hungry get good food at the food bank, but they know they will be hungry again in January. Daddies or mommies may lose their job. A shepherd and a sheep may be missing. Will I get what I want for Christmas? There are plenty of worries, even at Christmas.

So, let's go to our regular spot now and have a seat.

Remember last week this little sheep came into the manger and said in a quiet trembling voice; "BAA". Somehow, when that sheep entered this manger last Sunday, he knew that something important was about to happen here. He knew not what!

(BRING OUT THE SHEPHERD)

Now, the shepherd noticed right away that one of his sheep was missing and he is very worried. As you probably already know, a GOOD shepherd would worry if even one of his 100 sheep is missing. He knows the name of EVERY ONE of his sheep. Oh! What to do? And the shepherd worried.

The shepherd has also been noticing Barabas standing quietly watching the sheep. In fact, once in a while, while the sheep were asleep, and there were no wolves around, they played a game or two of Parcheesi.

So the shepherd has come to trust Barabas. Maybe Barabas could watch the flock while the shepherd goes to find the lost sheep?

They talked it over and Barabas said "I can watch over your sheep! I will protect them if a wolf comes, or a bear or a bad guy!" Barabas was a little worried to have such an important assignment as a second grader, but he knew he could do it and it was the right thing to do.

The shepherd wasn't sure where to search, but when he saw this little stable, curiously trembling with excitement, he sensed that this could be the right place and he was filled with a surprising HOPE as he approached.

And he found his lost sheep! And, as he was about to take the sheep back to the flock, he paused and felt the same hopeful excitement that his sheep had felt. In fact, he felt the stable trembling with excitement. There was something that felt holy here!

That shepherd looked at the empty "feeding trough", except for the hay, and he knelt down.

He prayed "Thank you Good Lord for leading me to find what I worried was lost. Thank you for teaching me HOPE! THE END