

Devotion – Third Week of Advent, 2021
Rev. Jeanne Simpson

This Saturday we will sing a beautiful cantata, “The First Light,” by Tom Fettke. It will be a combination of carols we know and things that Fettke has written. If his name sounds familiar, look in your hymnbook for the name of the editor – that’s right – same guy. Fettke has written hundreds of choral compositions over the last 50 years. His classic choral work “The Majesty and Glory of Your Name,” is sung by thousands of church and school choirs around the world.

Fettke is from California originally, where he taught vocal music in the public school systems. He also served as a church choir director and minister of music in churches large and small for over 30 years. He lives in Nashville now, a father of two married sons, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In the cantata, his words occasionally move me deeply. This poem, that a narrator reads while quiet music plays in the background, is about the angel who comes to the shepherds. The words are surprising – words I wouldn’t ordinarily think of. We have talked of Gabriel the last two Sundays coming to Zechariah and then Mary. So perhaps it is fitting that we look at the experience of the angel who comes to give the good news to lowly shepherds on a hillside on the night that Jesus born.

A Miraculous Night

It was a clear, blue night. I played a long, slow, silver sound straight out and watched it curve over the universe, curl past stars, slide past solar systems, and loop galaxies.

I saw it wind in space and drop, spiraling to spill over the heads of cold shepherds in a field ‘way down on a small ball called Earth....

I stood before the shepherds, and as the glory of the Lord shone around them, they became terrified. I said to them, “Do not be afraid; I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you. He is Christ the Lord.”

Join us Saturday at 3:00 as we sing to the glory of God about this holy child.

Jeanne