

Read also Luke 2:8-15. Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Thank the adults who helped. (See bulletin insert) has had a big role in helping. The children of this church are actively involved, thanks to the service of Lori Glover and Youth Director Ross Shipman.

We are intentional because the Lord told us to teach our children every day. God said to Moses:

Teach [my Word] to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors. (Deu. 11:19-21)

Did you hear it? The Word helps you and your children flourish.

Take out your bulletin and look at the CTW. This is today's Scripture:

In that day the heir to David's throne will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to him, and the land where he lives will be a glorious place. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to bring back his people who had been conquered and scattered across the distant lands. . . . They shall return home. There will be a highway all the way from Assyria, easy traveling for the remnant left of God's people—just as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt. (Isaiah 11:10-16 excerpts)

- Jealousies will be gone;
- Rivalries will disappear;
- Enemies will be conquered and subdued.

A straight highway will be made for them to home.

In exile Israel was scattered. It was hard to have a sense of belonging. But Isaiah assures the people that there will be not only a place to go, but a secure road leading there.

The children talked about the shepherds. This was an unknown event to the shepherd, an unexpected surprise, and no particular road led to it, yet *God had a way of pointing the way.*

Are you pointing a way—not just to these children, they are here, being nurtured in the church. But are you pointing the way to your adult children, nieces, nephews, and other family members?

A few years ago a woman came to this church with her adult daughter. She was living with her mother while her husband served in Iraq. The daughter had some serious medical problems. Her mother insisted that they come to church every Sunday together. She believed that without the Lord, life was tenuous, but with the Lord, with a habit of worship, and receiving the Word of the Lord every week, her daughter would learn to turn to the Lord; believe; and be strengthened. The Lord would be a place to belong.

Aaron, the shepherd in the children's play, didn't fit in anywhere. Because he really couldn't do the job, he could have been left out or booted out. But with God no one is ever booted out. God makes a place.

The place for Israel—and for you and me—is to cling to God through Jesus.

When Israel was exiled in foreign lands they wondered if God was with them. There was no church; nor much else to remind them of their homeland or their faith. But God was teaching them that God traveled with them and would lead them right back to their home. Your job, as an adult, as a parent and grandparent, is to encourage and guide those under your influence to this straight path of God.

Truly Israel was learning that on that journey, they would find home with God, who was with them and would fill their hearts. And, he is with us always, when we make the effort to see and learn from him.

Have you made room for him in your heart? Are you God's student? Seek him, and you will find the best place to belong.

AMEN