

Stories of Wonder

Homily by Reverend Rebecca M. Bryan

December 24, 2023

Tell me a story...

Tell me the time when you and grandpa met for the first time.

Remind me how I was born.

What happened when you fell off that horse, or the time Uncle Sam plugged all the Christmas lights in and blew a fuse.

It is the time of stories. Hanukkah, solstice, now Christmas Eve, and soon-to-be Kwanzaa.

Most of us love stories, and as humans, we need them. We need stories to remind us of what matters and of who came before us. We need them to carry on the legacy of people we loved, to commemorate the kindness of strangers, and offer awe at the miracles of synchronicity. We need stories to help make sense of our lives and the world around us.

Aleks Krotoski says, "Stories are memory aids, instruction manuals and moral compasses." "We tell ourselves stories in order to live," writes Joan Didion. And, I believe, we need stories to understand each other, to create compassion, and to laugh. Stories are a key element of building connections.

Stories are treasures and they are ours to steward. For example, we get to choose the stories we remember after people die. These are the stories we tell ourselves and our children. Choose wisely.

We are also the stewards of other people's stories. When people share a story they are sharing a part of themselves with us. Listen well.

We are the storytellers for our ancestors, teachers, and those who have made a difference in our lives. Tell their stories well.

Tonight is all about storytelling. Whether we are Christian, Agnostic, Jewish, or Buddhist, the stories of Christmas are about so much more than fact or myth. They are stories of hope, promise, and following a star. They keep alive the belief in justice for all people, wishes coming true, and life through the eyes and heart of a child. Every year we return to hear their messages again.

They are the Christmas Story.

Come, let us remember and be renewed in their glow.

Amen.