

Okay, I'll admit it – I'm a closet Christmas-movie-junkie. I watch them all: The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Rudolph-the-Red-Nosed Reindeer, Elf, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, Santa Clause (I, II, III), It's A Wonderful Life, Miracle on 42nd Street and of course the classic, A Charlie Brown Christmas...

Remember that one? Let me jog your memory and help us to remember what this is all about. Charlie Brown goes out to get a Christmas tree and all he got was the puniest tree on the lot. In the midst of his frustration, he yelled out, "Does anybody remember what Christmas is all about?" Then comes Linus and he says, "I know what it is all about" and quotes from the Gospel of Luke 2...

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." (vs. 8-14)

Beginning this weekend, we're going to be start our tour through the story of Christ's birth in a series we've calling, "Advent Conspiracy." I know original thought there, right? Yes, the concept is taken from the movement by the same name – But, I'm going to be putting my own spin and twist on such themes as: Worship Fully, Spend Less and Love All. We'll dive into each one from the perspective of the story that **IS** the story...

And then, on Christmas Eve we'll gather together as a family of faith for what I hope becomes a New Life favorite and classic – Our candle-light service. A special time of singing the classic Christmas songs, lighting candles and reading Scripture. It's going to be something that I believe you and your family will not want to miss and will look forward to year after year...

Tonight my family participates in our very first Victorian Walk, and with Karen's parents in for a visit, it should prove to be a special and exciting evening. We've talking about it for weeks and can't wait to see it! Hopefully we'll meet up with some of you on Broadway – I look forward to it, I hope you do as well.

Be Strong, Be Courageous, Be Fearless – and remember...

Christ **IS** All!
Pastor Mark