

Octave Day of Christmas Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins

By the Right Reverend Michael W. Hawkins

Bishop of Saskatchewan

The Shepherds head out in the middle of the night to look for the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, with only this single and odd clue: “ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” He is the babe, lying in a manger. It is not where we would look for a King or God, in the rough wood of a manger, but this is the sign, the only sign given. It is as astonishing and requires the same faith and humility to receive it as the final sign, the rough wood of the cross.

The Shepherds went to Bethlehem to see this thing, and their journey is our journey. We come seeking, especially in and for this New Year, a clearer vision of what the Lord has made known to us. We come to Bethlehem, which means

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“house of bread” and it is our house of bread, too. There is only one surprisingly humble sign of the presence of our God and King and Saviour – the babe in the manger, who later becomes the man on the cross.

They saw and they heard, and I pray that God would grant us such a vision and would speak to our open hearts today. And they returned glorifying and praising God, as they knew the agreement of gospel word and sign. May it be so for us as well.