The Scripture reading this morning, tells us of Luke’s understanding of Jesus being born fully formed for his later ministry. It also demonstrates so timeless truths about teen agers, and reminds us again that the Holy Family was a real family!

Today, December 30th, is the sixth day of the 12 Days of Christmas. This is a time when one could preach about modern myths about this time…the 1980’s saw an esoteric turn to the “Lost years of Jesus.” Did Jesus go to India or evn Europe between the age of 12 and 29? These are the “Lost Years” but most scholars agree that during those years, Jesus wa most likely found in the carpentry business, as Joseph had been before him.

In the song the Twelve Days of Christmas was supposedly about some hidden Catholic catechism, and in that scenario, 6 lords a leaping was supposedly about the 6 days of creation but that “explanation “was a product of the 1990’s, not of history.

My favourite memory of that song is Geordie Roberts, the Minister of Music at Highland United in North Vancouver, who every year, had the whole Family Christmas event stand on the month of their birth ;;;up and down the entire song. For the poor folks born in January, it was an aerobic workout!

Now that Christmas is past, we enter a new season – a time of holy expectation of Epiphany, the manifestation of the Son of God in us, the birth of the kingdom of God for the whole world. We await the arrival of a new day, the beginning of a new age, a new time for humankind.

This is an exciting time between two big feast days “between the years” – between Christmas and Epiphany – and it can be for us, the crowning of the year.

Advent launched us and now we’re into the practice of Christmas

Launched!!!

## WHEN THE SONG OF THE ANGELS IS STILLED (Howard Thurman)

**When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled**
When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman.

Let the work of Christmas begin! Let’s begin it together! It’s been put to music many times, once in one of our United Church hymn books. Perhaps one such tune comes to your mind when you hear the title?

The week between these two feasts invites us to reflect on what Thurman calls The work of Christmas

What better time to right old wrongs and heal old wounds? To leave regrets behind? To make peace with one another and enter the New Year with a clear conscience and a free heart?

**This is also** a time to look forward. How will we live Christmas? How will we do the “work of Christmas?” How will it look to the world as we practice leaning into Christmastide ?

Leaning into Christmastide means practicing the Advent moral compass we have been celebrating the last 5 weeks….peace, hope, joy and love. Compass points, guide posts for our going forward into the rest of the year….. How will it show up that we are Christmas people? The Christmas people are fed by spiritual resources which allow us to radically share real and figurative bread.

**This is not the conventional experience** of Christmas and its comfortable and satisfying holiday atmosphere. Humankind needs desperately to find this deeper meaning of Christmas which transforms people's hearts and consequently their whole lives and relationships. This is the eternal mystery of Christmas, its great power and light, its everlasting gospel of love, unity and purity, its infinite joy and gladness. We must discover what it means that the kingdom of God was born on this earth as a little child, when the time was fulfilled.

**The days between Christmas and New Year** – “between the years” – are a time to reflect on the miracle of Christmas and to look toward the challenges of the coming year.