



It has always been the case and will always be the case, across all religions and nations, peoples and cultures, that the only way we can get at big truths, at big mysteries is through story. And these stories sometimes seem deceptively simple.

At Christmas the story is, of course, about a young couple who must go on a journey to be counted. There is an inn keeper, there's sheep, there's cows. There's a sky full of angels sent to see shepherds. There are these magi from the East. Every person, every character in this story points us to a bigger truth.

So let's start perhaps tonight with the shepherds. Why shepherds? Shepherds were the essential workers. Shepherds were the night shift workers. Shepherds were the ones who had the job we all knew was necessary but that some of us were glad we didn't have. It sounded a little bit cold, a little bit unpleasant, a little bit inconvenient.

I think the shepherds today are the night shift workers in the care homes speaking quietly so as not to wake the patients; the truck drivers driving diligently on our very broken roads to make sure the goods get to us on time— That we're cared for.

On Christmas night God sends a sky full of angels to the essential workers, to the forgotten. God is breaking into time and space as love and God wants them to be the first to know. God is reversing the hierarchy and God wants them to be the first to know.

And so, this Christmas I invite you to look again at this story, played out on a seemingly small stage. But a story that is always happening again and again and again, as God continues to break into history with skies full of angels, starting with the shepherds. Amen.

Merry Christmas.

