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A few years ago we installed a wood-burning stove into the existing fireplace in the living room of our home. Though we have other sources of heat, I can definitely say that there is nothing quite like the warmth that radiates from this wood stove nestled in the red bricks.

In Luke 2:1-7 we follow the journey of Joseph and very-pregnant Mary on their way to Bethlehem to be registered in the census of Caesar Augustus. I can't imagine the insecurity of leaving hearth and home so late in pregnancy. I imagine Joseph would have much preferred to be stocking his own fireplace with the wood he had prepared, and that Mary would have been more than eager for the comfort of her own bed.

Instead, Joseph and Mary find themselves in a cold stable, away from the fireplace of the inn. It's THIS scene where the warmth and radiating light of Jesus Christ enters our story. Did they know? Did Joseph and Mary notice the heat and the fullness of God's love in that Babe? Was the stable awash in God's redeeming light emanating from the newborn Savior?

The entry point for God's redemption wasn't in the comfort of their homes, it wasn't even in the comfort of the stocked and hosted inn where Christ entered. It comes in a place bereft of comfort and full of all lowliness.

We are but one day past the longest night of the year. If you are finding yourself in the "stable" of winter, eager for a touch of warmth and light, be encouraged. It is this very place where Christ bursts into the scene with wood-stove warmth, stoked from the authenticity of love for you and for all that God has created. It is this exact place where the light of Christ will flood, illuminating the life of Christ within you - moving you closer and closer to the comfort of God.

### QUESTIONS

1. **Reflect:** How warm does the presence of Christ feel in your life right now? A raging fire? A small candle?
2. **Receive:** The warmth and light of Christ breaking into your story anew this day.
3. **Respond:** The life of Christ within you - this warmth cannot be kept to ourselves. How will you offer Christ's warmth to the people and places God has put in front of you?

 BETHANY'S HOLIDAY PLAYLIST

Join us this Advent season for weekly devotional content!

