

Matthew 2:13-23
“The Journey Is Home”
December 18, 2011

Maple Grove UMC

There is a house on the Kansas prairie that in some ways will always be home for me in a way no other place on earth can be. My parents bought it when they were first married and lived there for 50 years. I lived there for the first 18 years of my life and visited often for 25 more. I have memories associated with every corner of every room.

We sold the house after my mother died; I don't even know who lives there now. A couple of years ago I drove back to that house, and parked across the street for a while, reminiscing. And it occurred to me that as powerful as my attachment to that house is, it's not home anymore. What came to me was that I have been home everywhere I've lived—even if I didn't often realize it at the time. Whether it's been a dorm room, the little apartment Carolyn and I had in Atlanta, or a lovely parsonage here on Schreyer Place, we've been together, we've done God's will the best we know how, Christ has always been with us—wherever we've gone, the journey is home.

That's how it was for Mary and Joseph. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the family had to flee for their lives because King Herod wanted to kill all the baby boys. So they lived for a while as refugees in Egypt. When Herod died they came back to the Holy Land, but they were still afraid to go back to Bethlehem so they moved to a new town, a place called Nazareth. Not an easy home life Mary and Joseph had as they were starting a family. But here's the thing: they were together, they were doing God's will, Christ was always with them, little as he was. Wherever they went, the journey was home.

Are you going home for Christmas? It may be there's a certain house or piece of land that in certain ways will always be home for you in a way no other place on earth can ever be. There may be people you long to be with. And if it's possible I hope you get to visit those places and people this Christmas. But home is not only a place on earth. Mary and Joseph had to journey far and back again. So home is to do God's will. Home is to know God is with you. Home, finally, is where Christ is. So wherever you go, may the journey be home.