

I remember one night when I lived in eastern Maryland, driving along the dark country road home. We lived next-door to the church. It was right before Christmas, and as we rounded the last curve, I looked up and saw - literally saw – a bright star shoot over the church, right over the church, like the guiding star that hung over the manger so many years ago.

“The heavens reveal the glory of God,” the Psalmist wrote, and anyone who has stood like wise men or shepherds outside at night knows this to be true. The expanse of stars and galaxies and even darkness, all disclose God.

Imagine the shepherds standing alongside gentle hills, peering into eternity, they practically touched God. You, too, with them, meditatively still, no words, no space you have to fill, your soul next to God’s, eyes closed.

Breathe in, breathe out.

You open your eyes and see the translucent swath of the Milky Way, a gentle brushstroke across the sky, and as you stand in the cold air staring through the Milky Way into eternity, you literally pull that eternity into yourself as you breathe.

Surprisingly, strangely, you notice the barest fold in the air – almost like a ripple in water, only it is the nighttime air, not a pond.

You close, then open, your eyes to look again, and the air actually undulates. Between the folds, both angel and light slip through, as though a door has opened, translating the angel from heaven to earth.

The door shuts but the light continues, for Gabriel is alive, with the shimmering glory of the Lord. Light momentary blinds the shepherds; they rub their eyes like children waking-up.

You and I also rub our eyes, as people who live in deep darkness and on whom a light has shined.

For God – Emmanuel – is with us, this night, light is with us, this night.

Physicists now believe multiple universes exist side by side, dozens, perhaps, right here, this close, yet impenetrable.

These physicists also posit that atomic mass from one dimension - this world – can actually slip into another.

Perhaps that is how Gabriel appeared, and the heavenly host, as well, through some dimensional portal. To proclaim God's grace: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth."

Multiple dimensions, and now physicists think they have proved the existence of the Higgs Boson. "Boson" means particle, and the Higgs Boson is theorized as the smallest particle. If they are right, it means we have identified the fundamental building block of the known physical world.

Ironically, the Higgs Boson is also called The God Particle. I say ironically because scientists do not actually think the Higgs Boson is God – or is necessarily where God exists – but:

The poetry and witness of Scripture suggests that God is exactly there, in the smallest of spaces, not just in the expanse of heaven. "Is there no place that God is not? If I go to the heavens, thou art there. If I go down to Sheol, thou art there."

Perhaps it is possible, now dream with me, here:

Science reveals God.

Indeed,

 "I believe in physics."

 "I believe in science."

 I also "believe in God,
 the Father Almighty."

Religion and science, and the older I get, the more I wonder whether science might actually facilitate an understanding of God, and not oppose it. Not that religion is superior to science – not the reverse, either – but that science and religion are complements.

The mystery of eternity refracted through tiniest boson. There is no place that God is not.

The God particle. Inside of you. Permeating your physical body, shedding light into your soul.

But sadly, as you stare into deep darkness, the air crisp, the truth is that many people – some here and others you know – don't feel connection.

Don't feel purpose.

So many people are just going through the motions, but why bother? Life seems somehow fragile. Broken relationships, unemployment, under-employment, wrong paths, cancer and other illness, addiction or just plain bad behavior, have isolated – perhaps you.

Maybe you have suffered at the hands of another; maybe you have caused others to suffer. Or, maybe you simply lost your way.

We all do, sometimes.

You look into the sky and see the emptiness of the expanse, and not its eternal fullness.

Despair and not hope.

It is to you the angels appear, it is to you a Saviour has come.

Have you not seen? Do you not know?

There is no place that God is not. If you go to the highest heaven, God is there; if you go to the lowest depths, God is there.

You can find both God and promise inside of yourself, at the very core of your being.

It is true.

Barbara Brown Taylor writes of God and creation (paraphrasing very loosely): That God spoke, and bats and hummingbirds, dragonflies and eagles flew.

Lions and field mice and elephants roamed.

God spoke again, and stingrays and jellyfish, sharks and whales swam.

But then – God spoke the final word – and, says Taylor, this word was dangerous. Because by speaking this word, God risked everything, to share everything, with you.

“Ad am.” Human. Adam.

But not the morass of humanity, the intimacy of each person. God spoke your name. Judy, Jim, Sam, Tiffany. God spoke Fred and Kiesha and Jane. God is still speaking your name.

The birth of Jesus isn't just about another baby being born, it is about your creation in the first place, and your repair and salvation in the second.

God risked it all, and God still risks it all –

so that, as the carol says, your soul would, on this night, feel its worth.

You are not alone. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

For unto you is born this day in the City of David hope.

And so, with the shepherds, let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass.