

Sermon  
Christmas Day  
December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
The Rev. Victoria Scott  
Church of the Ascension, Ottawa

Readings: [Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, \(15-20\); John 1:1-14](#)

Christmas Day. Once again we gather to celebrate Christ's birth. Luke's gospel brings us a story with angels and shepherds. A story that is heavenly and earthly. A tiny baby. A story with splendor and vulnerability. And then, John's telling: nothing in it we can put in a manger scene: no baby Jesus, no Mary saying yes, no Joseph believing in dreams and standing in solidarity with Mary. No shepherds. No angels. No Magi. Only: the Word. In the flesh. Light, and life, dwelling among us. John's Gospel tells us that "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...". The Word came to us, full of grace and truth, to be **with us**.

I love John's Gospel. I love the mystery and the metaphor it offers. In the Incarnation, all that mystery, all that grace and truth, come to us in the Word, Jesus, flesh, born of Mary. This takes all of the mystery of God, and moves it from somewhere "out there"/"up there" into Mary's arms. The Word was **with** God and the Word was and is **with us** in Jesus. With us, in a tiny baby, defenseless, vulnerable, waiting to be held, embraced and loved. God came to be with us, one

of us. God comes to us in love, asking to be loved. Asking to be held and cherished and cared for as we would care for a newborn. Asking for us to care for each other, and for our world, the same way. Asking for us to see the light in ourselves, in each other, in all of creation.

Richard Rohr says this:

“When God gives of God’s self, one of two things happens: either flesh is inspirited or Spirit is enfleshed. This pattern is really very clear...God’s will is always incarnation. And against all of our godly expectations, it appears that for God, matter really matters. God, who is Spirit, chose to materialize...” (adapted from *Near Occasions of Grace*)

Matter matters and God chose to materialize. God’s will is always incarnation: the fusion of matter and spirit.

Rohr goes on to say this:

“Jesus came to model for us that these two seemingly different worlds [matter and spirit] are and always have been one. We just couldn’t imagine it intellectually until God put them together in one body that we could see and touch and love.”

This is why Luke’s Gospel and John’s Gospel are both great gifts to us. Luke brings us a story with tangible details that we can imagine seeing, and touching,

and loving. A tiny, vulnerable baby. This reminds us that matter matters. Our bodies matter. Our material world matters.

John, on the other hand, says to us: enter into the mystery. John reminds us of the Word – the true light – that has always been and is always being, in us and infused in all of creation. John reminds us that the Word, the true light, became flesh in Jesus, and dwelt among us to show us what is possible with God...to show us what is possible when we open our eyes, and our hearts and our minds to that light, and to putting flesh around that light ourselves.

God came into our messy, complicated world to be with us in the midst of the messiness. In the midst of the complications – in the midst of illness, and isolation and struggles. In the midst of both sorrow and joy. This is the hope in Christmas. God is with us.

Last Sunday, I shared Meister Eckhart's words:

“What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of Man is begotten in us.”

The Son of Man is begotten in us when we remember that the light of God's love and grace is always there. In us, and in all things. God is there with us,

waiting for us to put flesh around that light, around that love and grace, and to bring it into the world.

If we look to God, and to Jesus as problem solvers we will wonder why there is so much turmoil, suffering, messiness, and confusion in our world. Why hasn't God sorted it all out for us yet? We will wonder this more than ever this Christmas, as these pandemic days continue...

John's Gospel, again: the Word, that was in the beginning, the Word that was with God, the Word that was God, came to be with us.

God hasn't sorted it all out for us yet because God didn't choose the word "for". God chose the word with.

God said, together, with compassion, and grace and peace and justice we are with each other. We are with each other in joy and in sorrow. In suffering and in health and happiness. All of creation is a *with* and it's in living out that with that we will find – see, kindle – a light and a love that darkness cannot extinguish.

I pray that this Christmas, we will all feel the radiance and warmth of God's light and love. The Word among us, **with** us. God, with us, is the hope in Christmas. It infuses all the pain and suffering and injustice of our world with hope. God came to us in Jesus as love – endless, limitless love – embodied. To

dwell among us to show us that it is possible to live *with* God – to live fully, body, mind and spirit. May God’s light and love infuse this Christmas, and these pandemic days with hope. May the Word – God’s light and love – take flesh in us, this Christmas, and all our days. In Jesus name. Amen.