

January 2nd Worship – 2nd Sunday of Christmas
Introduction to the Day

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who sends the word with angels,
who is made flesh among all peoples,
and who breathes peace on all the earth.

Amen.

In Christ, we are bold to name our sin and cry out
for peace.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,

we confess our sin before you.

We replace compassion with competition.

We seek what is mighty while ignoring the meek.

We are quick to anger but slow to forgive.

**We have not put on love in harmony with you.
Wrap us in the grace of your powerful Word.
Swaddle our hearts with your peace,
that all we do, in word or deed,
may reflect your love born among us.**

Amen.

I bring you good news of great joy for all people:

God has come among us

in the child born of Mary, Christ the Lord.

† In Christ your sins are forgiven

and you are clothed in peace.

Amen.

Gathering Song “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

#283 vs. 1,2,4

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lesson – Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;

proclaim, give praise, and say, “Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.”

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;

for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who

scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.

¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

Children's Message

Gospel – John 1:1-18

[¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

As we find ourselves still in the process of the flipping of the calendar, and perhaps still figuring out what that resolution is going to be, we are confronted with a reminder. We are given a reminder of who it is that we are as people of faith.

John's Gospel starts with a recounting of creation if you will.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

This is a reminder for us that Jesus has been present, at least the Godliness of Jesus, since the beginning. Since creation. Jesus, the Word, was with God, and the Word was God.

It is also a bit of a reminder that God saw that Jesus Godliness on its own may not have been enough. Had it been enough, would the Word have taken on flesh and lived among us?

We see countless times where God shows God's might, God's promise of God's love for God's people, but we are continually also reminded that there is still suffering and pain, grief and sorrow. God does not wipe that away.

Instead, God sends Jesus, the Word (who has been there since the beginning) made flesh, to live among us.

John gives us, as people of faith living in this 21 century world that we are in, this reminder. Through God taking on human form and living among us, we are given hope. We are given a companion in the journey of life that comes with all of the ups and downs, joys and sorrows, pain and grief that we know it comes with. It does not take it away, but brings us a comforter.

Anyone who has been through those ebbs and flows of life, knows that what happens in those moments may not be our most perfect, in fact they may be anything but.

As John writes, "from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace."

God taking on human form and living among us is the literal embodiment of, “I know things are difficult right now, and you may not be proud of what you’re doing, but you are my child, I love you, and we will get through this.”

And there is something about hearing this message eight days out from the wonder and amazement of Christmas Eve worship, that sometimes makes it all the more difficult to hear.

Like New Year’s resolutions and wanting to cling to the simple hope of saying we are going to make a change, we want to cling to the simple hope of a baby in a manger, without admitting what that baby actually means for us as people of faith.

But when we truly look at what it means for us, New Years resolutions are about making ourselves better people. Whether that’s our health or how we treat others, rarely are resolutions made to be less of a good person. Even if your resolution is to focus more on yourself, you’re doing that because you need it and that is okay. It’s not selfish, it’s healthy.

The same goes for remembering the true presence of Christ in the afterglow of the Christmas season. Jesus, the Word made flesh, is the embodiment of God’s love for God’s people. In Christ’s coming into the world we are given the full meaning of grace and truth.

- Grace: receiving those things we know we do not deserve
- Truth: we are loved unconditionally by a God who knew this plan from the creation of the universe.

So, church, what do we do with this reminder of this promise? And for many of us, this isn’t breaking news, it is a reminder. We’ve known what Jesus’ presence means for us. That isn’t new.

But, have we always done our best job of letting that presence shape us and how we live in the world? I’m certain there are times I could have done better at that.

And here is the beauty of it. There is grace for those moments. For me, and for you, and for us as a church.

Happy New Year. Thanks be to God. Amen

Song of the Day **“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”** **#256**

Apostle’s Creed

Prayers

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

You make yourself known in the gift of language in diverse forms. Draw our attention to those who communicate through sign, braille, and technology. Make your church a place where all methods of communication are celebrated. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Creating God, the sun greets us anew each morning. Thank you for waking us up today to witness and share your abundance. Awaken us always to your wisdom and deepen our care for your natural world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Emmanuel, in your name we are assured that you are with us. Train nations and peoples to honor and respect one another, especially those whose names and identities have been mistreated, neglected, or oppressed. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

You adopt us as your beloved ones. Accompany parents and children navigating the adoption process, especially those in the foster system. Sustain those struggling with infertility or pregnancy loss. Tenderly embrace all in need (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, Steve Bradford, David Gunderson, Cassie Skinner, Keith Franson*). Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You journey with us through change. Guide those assuming new roles in this congregation or making transitions in their families, workplaces, or communities (*especially*). As the seasons and the calendar change, equip us for unexpected challenges. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give you thanks for all who modeled lives of loving service (*especially Wilhelm Loehe, whom we commemorate today*). Lead us in your grace until, with all your saints, we enter the fullness of your glory. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Gracious God,
your Word-made-flesh brings harmony to the earth.
As we offer ourselves and these your gifts,
prepare us to receive the grace and truth
you offer at this table
and renew in us the song of your salvation,
in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Communion Prayer

Sending Song

“Go Tell It On the Mountain”

#290

Blessing

The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.
Amen.

Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior.

Thanks be to God.

Announcements

If you purchased a poinsettia for the sanctuary, feel free to stop by the church Monday-Thursday to pick it up.

Offering Envelopes

Your offering envelopes are now available to be picked up at the Main entrance outside the fellowship hall.

Altar Flowers

If you would like to have flowers on the altar, please sign up on the chart outside the office (or call the church office). The cost is \$22.