

Order of Service for January 3, 2021 - Christmas 2

GATHERING

Gathering Song - 292, Love Has Come

Love has come — a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how the joy of love arises:

Love! Love! Born unto you, a Saviour! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay.

See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying?

Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers; Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.

Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God most high.

(Hymn lyrics printed under CCLI Licence # 11411292)

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, is with us all.

Litany

P - In a world of poverty and despair,

C - Christ is come!

P - In a world of injustice and hunger,

C - Christ is come!

P - In a world of racism and exploitation,

C - Christ is come!

P - In a world of pandemic and isolation,

C - Christ is come!

P - Even among us, in this time and place,

C - Christ is come! Alleluia!

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Almighty God, you shine in all the earth with your Word made flesh. By your grace empower us to reflect your love in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. Alleluia

Gospel Reading John 1:1-18

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

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

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

And the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ... From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The gospel of the Lord.

Sermon

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

Word Communication Expression SELF-expression

Not just communicating an idea A thought A random sound bite

Rather, communicating one's very self One's very identity One's very soul

"In the beginning was the Word"

The self THE Self The One Self who truly IS The fundamental ONE

The Ground of Being ALL being The One who was, who is, and will be

The ultimate Self Who was never NOT engaged in self-expression Who has always been sharing Self Who has always been sharing Identity Who has always sharing Soul

The nature of the Word is that it must be UTTERED To be a word To be THE Word

To be faithful to who the Word IS The Word must be spoken Must be proclaimed

Must be shared

"What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Confusion reigns! Metaphors get mixed And jumbled And twisted around each other

Because words are, after all, only words And cannot communicate ALL aspects of being ALL facets of self ALL dimensions of soul Words cannot completely convey The Word

So Self-expression becomes Word becomes Life becomes Light Light shining in the void In the vacuum THIS void OUR vacuum This REALITY OUR reality

Word becomes Life becomes Light shining in OUR void In OUR vacuum In our lives...

SO THAT our lives OUR lives May be filled with the Word become Life become Light

Not that WE might become the Light But that we Like John May point TO the Light Which is Life Which is Word Which is the ultimate Self's Self-expression

The Self which must be shared The Word which must be spoken The Life which must be lived
The Light which must shine In the void ESPECIALLY in the void Especially in OUR void, our
vacuum

To be faithful to who the Word IS The Word must be spoken Must be proclaimed Must be
shared AND Must be heard

Except...

*“He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know
him.”*

There are some who do not receive This holy Self-expression Who do not hear this Word Who
distance from this Life Who cannot see this Light Shining in the void Shining in THEIR
vacuum

This is the truest truth of the Word This is the hardest part of God’s self-expression

The void has not overcome the Light But The Light still shines In the void

Word becomes Life becomes Light For the sake of those who dwell in the vacuum But the
vacuum does not thereby disappear

*“But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of
God....”*

More confusion! More metaphors! Word becomes Life becomes Light Becomes Power Power
to become Power to be changed Power to be grown Power to be transformed Into something
different Into something new Into someONE different and new
OUR self is called into the Eternal Self So that WE might become new selves Selves who are
able to hear the Word To live the Life To see the Light To receive the Power To become our
true selves To become children... Of God

But lest we forget It is not our response To this Word become Life become Light become Power
That makes this change possible That makes this growth happen That makes this transformation
visible Or even viable

It is God’s self-expression Speaking in us Living in us Shining in us Exploding in us Which
does this To us For us With us

God saying who God IS In US Is what makes us children of God

And yet Not only that There is more (Because there is ALWAYS more with God!)

For God’s self-expression to be faithful to WHO GOD IS The Word must be not only be spoken
Be proclaimed Be shared
The Word become Life become Light become Power... Must be ENCOUNTERED

“And the Word became flesh and pitched his tent with us....”

The Word becomes Life becomes Light becomes Power Becomes Flesh and Blood Becomes one with whom we interact One with whom we speak One with whom we struggle One with whom we eat One with whom we pray One with whom we... Live And even die

And this One with whom we live And die Because he is faithful to who he is Because he is faithful to God’s self-expression Because he IS God’s self-expression Makes God known Here Now Among us In this void In your vacuum In whatever emptiness might be experienced this day Speaking love Living love Shining love Empowering love Becoming love In us For us With us In all For all With all

Word becomes Life becomes Light becomes Power becomes Human This day And ALL days

Merry Christmas
Amen

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Hymn of the Day - 284, 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

'Twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled
that mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim, and wand'ring hunters heard the hymn:

Refrain

Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender babe was found;
a ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped his beauty round;
but as the hunter braves drew nigh, the angel song rang loud and high: *Refrain*

The earliest moon of wintertime is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory on that helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. *Refrain*

O children of the forest free, the angel song is true;
the holy child of earth and heav'n is born this day for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy, who brings you beauty, peace and joy. *Refrain*

(Hymn lyrics printed under CCLI Licence # 11411292)

Prayers of the People

A - Joining our voices to the song of the angels, we pray for God’s creation, the church, and all in any need.

[Short pause]

A - Living Word, God’s self-expression, you continue to reveal your very Self to us. Open us to the Love you are. God who has come,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Word become Life, your self-expression speaks at the heart of our existence. Use us to point to your constant presence. God who has come,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Word become Light, your self-expression unlocks our sight, enabling to perceive more than we have in the past. Make known your calling in all of life. God who has come,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Word become Power, your self-expression moves us to become our true selves. Motivate your church to serve your creation. God who has come,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Word become flesh and blood, your self-expression surrounds us in the sick, the orphan, the refugee, the weak. We offer our prayers for those in need.

[*Long pause*]

Enable us to give up our strength, that we might become as authentically human as the baby in the manger. God who has come,

C - Hear our prayer.

A - Living Word, God's self expression, all we have, all we *are* is because of who you show yourself to be. Continue to speak, that we may hear. Continue to come, that we may follow.

God who has come,

C - Hear our prayer.

P - We ask all this in the name of the one who came, who comes, and who is to come, Christ Jesus, our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING

Benediction

P - Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
and sent the shepherds with good news for all,
bless you this day (†) through the Word made flesh.

C - Amen.

Sending Song - 298, The Bells of Christmas

The bells of Christmas chime once more; the heav'nly guest is at the door.
He comes to earthly dwellings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.

This world, though wide and far outspread, could scarcely find for you a bed.
Your cradle was a manger stall, no pearl nor silk nor kingly hall.

Now let us go with quiet mind, the swaddled babe with shepherds find,
to gaze on him who gladdens them, the loveliest flow'r of Jesse's stem.

Oh, join with me, in gladness sing, to keep our Christmas with our king,
until our song, from loving souls, like rushing mighty water rolls!

O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song, O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
O Son of Man, incarnate Word, great David's Son, great David's Lord:!

Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest, and keep your Christmas in our breast;
then David's harp-string, hushed so long, shall swell our jubilee of song.

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Dismissal

P - Go in peace. Christ is come.

C - Thanks be to God!

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