

Church of the Divine Love

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 26, 2021

10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence after the candles are lit

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#82 – Of the Father’s love begotten vs.1-3**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3**

Psalm 147

Second Lesson: **Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7**

Gradual Hymn **#324 -Let all mortal flesh keep silence**

Gospel: **John 1:1-18**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

General Thanksgivings pages 836, 837

Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#421 – All glory be to God on high**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 362

The Lord's Prayer page 364

The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer page 337

The Communion of the People

Communion Hymn – #496 – **How bright appears the Morning Star**

vs. 1 & 3

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #100 – **Joy to the world!**

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday December 26, 2021

Isaiah 61:10-61:3; Psalm 147; Galatians 3: 23-25; John 1: 1-18

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

How was your Christmas? It is a question I have asked and been asked over the last few days. While I understand what is being asked, I also hear an underlying assumption that Christmas is over. It is the same assumption that underlies the birthday wishes to Jesus. Happy birthday Jesus suggests that Christmas is the celebration of a past event, an anniversary. It is the reason why in at least a few homes the tree has already been taken down, the decorations packed away for another year, and the leftovers thrown out.

I raise these three points not as a criticism or judgment but diagnostically, in recognition that we are event driven people. We tend to live our lives from one event to the next. If you don't think so, take a look at your calendar. It is a schedule of events. Our days are full of events and if there is a day or two with no scheduled events then we say things like, nothing is going on that day, or I am not doing anything that day, as if there is no life, nothing to learn or discover, nothing to experience on those days. How different is St. John's understanding of Christmas, life, and humanity?

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. This, for St. John, is the Christmas story and it is set in the context of creation, "In the beginning." Creation is not an event of the past but the ongoing life of God with his people. St. John echoes and continues the Genesis story of creation, "In the beginning God said, 'Let there be...,' and there was...." Land, sky, vegetation, living creatures from the water, birds of the air, living creatures from the earth, and humankind made in the image and likeness of God.

Christmas is God continuing to give life to his people. And the Word became flesh and lived among us. Christmas, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, is the "festival of re-creation." It is God giving God's own life to his people. It is as if God said, I want humanity to see my face. I want them to hear my voice. I want them to touch me. I want them to smell my sweat. I want them to eat my body. I want to live their life. I want them to live my life. And the word became flesh and lived among us. This is God in the flesh, the divine human, holy humanity. This festival of re-creation is God's celebration of humanity. It is God entrusting God's self to human beings, to you and to me. It is God's reaffirmation of humanity's goodness. It is the sharing and exchanging of life between God and you and me. That's why the early church could say that God became human so that humanity might become God. The Son of God became the son of man so that the sons of men might become sons of God. Divinity was clothed in humanity so that humanity might clothed in divinity.

How beautiful is that? Imagine what that means for us. It means we are holy and intended to be holy, not as an achievement on our own but as a gift of God. This is the gift of Christmas. We have been given the power to become children of God. This happens not by blood, or the will of the flesh, or the will of people, but by God. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." God sees humanity as the opportunity and the means to reveal himself. Yet far too often we use our humanity as an excuse. I'm only human, we declare, as if we are somehow deficient. We fail to see, to believe, to understand that in the Word becoming flesh and living among us we are God's first sacrament. Human beings are the tangible, outward, and visible signs, and carriers of God's inward and spiritual presence.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a sacrament? Have you ever looked at someone across the street and said, hey, look! There is the sacramental image of God? Why not? Why do we not see that in ourselves and each other? After all, "The Word became flesh and lived among us." In the Jewish tradition that rabbis tell a story that each person has a procession of angels going before them and crying out, "Make way for the image of God." Imagine how different our lives and world would be if we lived with this as our reality and the truth that guided our lives.

Everywhere we go the angels go with us announcing the coming of the image of God and reminding us of who we are. That is the truth of Christmas for us. It is also the Christmas truth for the person living next door, for those we love, for those we fear, for those who are like us and those who are different, for the stranger, and for our enemies. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." The implications are profound. It changes how we see ourselves and one another, the way we live, our actions, and our words. It means that Christmas cannot be limited to an event. Christmas is a life to be lived, a way of being. It means that Christmas is more properly understood as a verb rather than a noun. So maybe we should stop asking, how was your Christmas? Are you recognizing the Word become flesh in your own life? Are you recognizing the Word become flesh in the lives of others? Do you see the procession of angels and hear their voices?

The incarnation of God, the embodiment of God in human life, the Word made flesh, is not limited to Jesus. Jesus is the picture, the pattern, the archetype of what the Word become flesh looks like. And we look at that picture so that we can recognize it in ourselves and one another. It is to be our way, our truth, our life. It describes who we are and who we can become. You and I are the continuation of the Word becoming flesh and living among us. So, what might that mean for you today? How will you let God's Word speak through your life, your flesh? With whom will you share that Word? What will it say to a world waiting to hear good news? What hope might it offer? What new life might that Word engender? What light might it bring to the darkness? What if we regarded and related to others as the Word become flesh?

The question isn't whether the Word became flesh in you, me, or anyone else. The question is whether we have eyes and hearts to see and trust that the Word has become flesh and is living among us, to let Christmas become a way of being day after day, and not simply a story to be told once a year. And the Word continues to become flesh and live among us. The Word became flesh and has never ceased living among us. So, make way. Wherever you go. Whatever you are doing. Whoever you are with. Make way for the image of God. Christmas your way through life. **Amen.**

Masks are required during the service.

SUNDAY – 1 CHRISTMAS	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
MONDAY	8:00 AM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:00 PM	AA MEETING	
SATURDAY – JAN. 1 ST - HOLY NAME		THRIFT SHOP CLOSED	
SUNDAY – JAN. 2 ND - 2 CHRISTMAS	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Girard Bishop	Chrissy Neville	Bob Curley
Nathan Treadwell	John Loubengeiger	Dorothy
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Tricia Oretle
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Robert Sweat
Martinisi Family	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Sylvia
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara	Gabriel	Aidan
Elodie	Del	Julia
People of Haiti	Parkhurst Family	Tim
Theresa K.	Amy E.	Jason
Christopher & Family	Victims of Natural Disasters	

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

We give thanks for the safe release of the Missionaries
in Haiti.