



Trinity Lutheran Church

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Christmas Eve

Dear Beloved of God,

Perhaps the birth story from Luke is the most beloved this time of year. As of this Weekly Piper, our Advent Season has shifted to Christmas, “the most wonderful time of the year,” well, for some perhaps. Our Christmas celebrations are ready to being so in part we consider this part of the story, simply:

⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Lk 2:6-7)

Of course, as we know, she and Joseph find themselves staying in a stable “because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke points out that this blessed birth takes place in the midst of historic events and political dynamics. That is to say, Jesus is born into this world that we know, despite all the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, we all experience.

We often associate “peace on earth” when it comes to Christmas. This year, however, we may all agree that this is the most challenging of Christmases any of us can remember. While we have hope as the vaccines for COVID-19 are being distributed and administered as fast as is humanly possible, peace, is still, for many of us, an illusive commodity.

Then again, Luke reminds us that Mary, being all of maybe 13, has no one to help with the delivery of “her firstborn son,” except her husband, Joseph! One wonders how much experience he had in assisting with childbirth. In any event, as hard as life is for us in the 21st century, it arguably pales in comparison to life in the days of Emperor Augustus of Ancient Rome and Quirinius governor of Syria when Jesus was born. Perhaps, that’s the point.

Into this world, broken and troubled as it is, Jesus—God-in-the-flesh—comes to us. He comes again this year at Christmas to bring us peace, hope, joy and life, meaningful, purposeful life! Despite sin and death, despite accidents and disease, despite humanity’s inhumanity, God comes in Jesus. Born of Mary and the Holy Spirit. “Born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth,” therefore, we again listen with our hearts to hear, “the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn king.”

May this year, the birth of Jesus be born in each of us in a special way as we celebration the greatest gift of all, Jesus born of Mary, born to die for all the world and lives that we might enjoy all the richest blessings God has to give. May those blessings be yours this year and throughout the New Year!

Glory to our newborn King!

Peace, joy and love,

Pastor Ron





“The People who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined” (Isaiah 9:2)

700 years before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus, the prophet Isaiah spoke these words to comfort God’s people. Isaiah spoke to a people who were under the shadow of invasion from Babylon and who would see Jerusalem destroyed. It was a dark time for the children of Israel.

In those dark days, God’s Word proclaimed that hope and salvation are coming. Isaiah is saying that the darkness cannot stop the light of our God. No matter how dark the day, God is bringing light and his salvation into the world.

There have been some days that seemed pretty dark in 2020. We have lived in the shadow of the pandemic. We have seen natural disasters, civil unrest, and political strife. It has left us feeling out of control and that the ground is shifting under our feet.

The Word of God that offered hope to God’s people thousands of years ago, has the same message for us today. No matter what darkness or shadow we find ourselves in, God is with us. God will never leave us alone. Our Lord Jesus promises us that he will be with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20) and that when he comes again, he will take us to himself (John 14:3). Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).

Life can be hard. But we know that the brokenness, the sin, and the darkness of this world does not have the last word. The end of all things is the victory of God in Christ Jesus. The end of all things is the God who is going to cast out the darkness and heal our hearts and mend our souls.

That God is with us now. We celebrate at Christmas that our Lord loved us so much that God would not sit by and watch us suffering. But the Creator of all things became flesh and lived among us. The God who brought all things into being, would not leave us to our suffering. But became flesh and to walk with us so that we might know we are never alone. As we contemplate the baby in the manger, we see the one who is Emmanuel. God with us.

God is with us and that makes all the difference. Christmas celebrates that God would not leave us to our suffering. But he stepped into our existence and our lives to show us a better way. In Jesus we see the way of love. We see the God who would stop and nothing to save us from sin, death and the devil. But also, God goes to any and all lengths to make us his own. We matter to the God who made heaven and earth.

As we look at the brokenness and darkness of this world, let us hear the Word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” The light of God, Jesus Christ has come into this world. As we look to the manger, and later look to the cross, we remember that Christ Jesus is the light of the world and there is no darkness that can overcome him.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless you and yours this Christmas,

The Allegheny Synod Office Staff

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