

Christmas Proclamation

The Twenty-fifth Day of December,
when ages beyond number had run their course
from the creation of the world,
when God in the beginning created heaven and
earth, and formed humanity in God's own likeness;
when century upon century had passed
since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the
Great Flood, as a sign of covenant and peace;
in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father
in faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees;
in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel
were led by Moses, in the Exodus from Egypt;
around the thousandth year since David was
anointed King;

in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
in the year seven hundred and fifty-two
since the foundation of the City of Rome;
in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar
Octavian Augustus, the whole world being at peace,
JESUS CHRIST, eternal God and Son of the eternal
Father, desiring to consecrate the world by his most
loving presence, was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and when nine months had passed since his
conception, was born of the Virgin Mary in
Bethlehem of Judah, and was made a human
person:

This is the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according
to the flesh.

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The Word was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8** He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. **9** The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and though the world

was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11** He came to those which are his own, but his own did not receive him. **12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--

13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. **14** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Sermon

Grace to you and peace from God our Father,
God's Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit:
Amen.

Part of the beauty of the logic of a lessons and carols service is that the lessons and carols do most of the proclaiming. Through the poetry of scripture, through the artful music of the hymns, we come to experience once again the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. God becomes present amongst us through our joint proclamation. So what am I do up here?

I'm here to make a connection, one simple and yet one that seems so far away. I'm here to hold in tension the manger, the crèche, and the cross. Here on Christmas Eve we come to celebrate the

goodness of God, God's gracious descent into humanity. We're here to join the choirs of heavenly angels and sing *gloria in excelsis deo*, glory to God in the highest. We're here to stand witness with the shepherds that our Great Shepherd has come. We're here to remember that God remembered us.

Each week at communion we hear the words, "do this in remembrance of me." This Greek word for remembrance is an incredible term. It doesn't just mean remember. It's not just about memory recall. It's about reenacting it, embodying it, living out the content of that past in the present time.

Here tonight, we gather in remembrance that God chose to become human in order to bring divinity into humanity, in order to restore the

goodness of creation. But tonight isn't just about the good feelings of memory recall. We aren't just supposed to remember that first Christmas. We're called to live lives that bring that gracious past into the present world. We're called not only to proclaim the Gospel, but to embody that Gospel in our everyday experiences.

And here, as we remember the birth of an innocent baby, one who happens to be the God of the universe, we must also remember the kind of life this baby will lead, and where that life ultimately leads. This baby heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, opens the ears of the deaf, helps the lame to walk, feeds the hungry, raises the dead, preaches a gospel of inclusion and peace, challenges religious leaders

and political authorities, and because of all that, ends up crucified as a young man. In this child, God was born to transform the world, born knowing that death was not far off. And God chose this birth anyway.

As we now move to communion, we remember this connection between the crèche and the cross, that this child's life is one of risk and inclusion, of love and life abundant, of death that we might also live. We do this, all of this, in remembrance of Jesus, the one whose birth signals for us new life, new creation, new heavens and new earth. Merry Christmas. Amen.