****CHRISTMAS Yr.B2020 St. John the Baptist Duncan

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:1-20

Luke

Greetings from St. John’s on this night of all nights. The night Jesus Christ is born. For those who are worshipping online with us, thank you for joining us. We give thanks today for your support of our “on-line” Christmas Market. It continues to be supported; your participation continues to give us strength in this time.

**The Gathering of the Community**

We gather recognizing that we live, work, and play in the traditional lands of the Coast Salish People, Cowichan Tribes. We continue to commit ourselves to the work of reconciliation and relationship building with our First Nations neighbours.

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** *(As we begin Advent our Call to Worship will be the Lighting of the Advent Wreath.)*

On the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, we have rejoiced in the great gift that is ours in Jesus Christ. Tonight we light the Christ Candle.

Christmas Eve

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus

and rejoice in His coming to us,

we light the Christ candle.

**Jesus Christ is our hope.**

**He is our peace.**

**Jesus Christ is our joy.**

**He is love--**

**pure, holy, undying love.**

Whoever believes in Him will never perish

but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15)

**HYMN**

**PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD:**

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 96**

**Praise to God Who Comes**

1 O sing to the Lord a new song;

sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name;**

**tell of his salvation from day to day.**

3 Declare his glory among the nations,

his marvellous works among all the peoples.

**4 For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;**

**he is to be revered above all gods.**

5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

but the Lord made the heavens.

**6 Honour and majesty are before him;**

**strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**

7 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

**8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;**

**bring an offering, and come into his courts.**

9 Worship the Lord in holy splendour;

tremble before him, all the earth.

**10 Say among the nations, ‘The Lord is king!**

**The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.**

**He will judge the peoples with equity.’**

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

**12 let the field exult, and everything in it.**

**Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy**

13 before the Lord; for he is coming,

for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,

and the peoples with his truth.

***Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever will be. AMEN.***

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN:**

**GOSPEL:**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 2:1-20

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**The Birth of Jesus**

2In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own towns to be registered. 4Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 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.

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14 ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ 16So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon: -The Ven. Brian Evans

*May the words of my lips and meditations of our hearts be ever acceptable to you, O Lord. Amen.*

**LOVE IS HERE**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2020

LOVE HAS COME

Greetings in the name of the F. S & HS.

Listening on the radio recently I heard reference to Mary and Joseph being the first refugee family. Like Mary, I pondered just how that is. I had never thought of The Holy Family being refugees.

In recent years the reference, Refugee Family, has taken on a whole new meaning for the world. Most recently the plight of refugees has grown to proportions we never thought possible. I found it interesting when I checked for synonyms in my word processing file for the word ‘plight’, this is what I discovered: predicament, dilemma, quandary, difficulty, trouble.

Interesting because these are all word’s we associate with Mary and Joseph and their return to Bethlehem for the Census ordered by Quirinius. This returning to Joseph’s hometown was no small feet and was filled with danger. Yet, they took to the road. Pictures would suggest they loaded every thing on their donkey along with Mary as she was with child.

I am not sure we can imagine what was going through their minds as they trekked along the road.

For Mary it was probably praying for a comfortable bed to rest in when they arrived. For Joseph it was about bringing home his bride-to-be from a different land and worry of her acceptance.

They had no idea what to expect. Certainly they did not expect to find all the hotels overbooked to the pint there was only a stable for them to house their donkey and prepare a place for them to sleep. We are not sure, except we do know Jesus would be born in that place. I am not sure they were expecting this to happen in Bethlehem.

2000+ yrs. on we have read and re-read all the accounts of this incident in history. We know Jesus had to be born in Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy of the Savior to be born and to be of the family of David.

As we know, in that day it came to pass – Jesus was born – Love came into the world.

For generations since people have returned home each year for Christmas. For some it is to share in the true sense of the journey and to experience Christ’s Mass in the family/parish church.

For years, in fact since 1988, Queen Elizabeth has spent Christmas at Sandringham House, the Queen's private country retreat on the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk. In many ways it is as if the family all return each year to this what we are told, a very family event.

Except for this year!

Except for this year is so common to many. With each Christmas letter we have received one common sound has been, except for this year.

A second common sound has been, although my family or our family and friends can not gather, I am so thankful for their health, happiness and love.

Love is the great gift we all can enjoy this Christmas. It may not be in the sense of children playing games, a table set for a large gathering, or what ever your norm has been in the past.

At the same time we will come together mindful of some of the great gifts we have learned to appreciate this year, or we might say have been able to take time to take stalk of them.

They may be:

1. To remember what is first in our lives – the love of our family.

2. To take that extra time to be gracious and loving, to all people.

3. To remember to take time for thanksgiving to God. I am very fond of Micah 6:8: “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

We have all known this person in way or another. The person who we would describe as a saint in our lives. The person who in the midst of all kinds of difficulties, heart-aches and tragedies, was always the same: poised, serene, confident… beautiful smile, radiant powerful expression on their face, that positive hopeful attitude.

Who when you may ask, how do you do it? The response would be along these lines:

“NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THE EXPERIENCE, I’VE ALWAYS HAD THE FEELING, GOD IS WITH US.”

This is the message of Christmas: God is with us. Not only is it the message of Christmas it is the promise of Christmas and the greatest gift ever given to the world. Our response is to open the door and let God in, in the person of Jesus Christ.

-OR-

We could say: Love is with us. Love is the promise of Christmas. Love in the person of Jesus the greatest given ever given has come incarnate to dwell with us.

Tonight we are called to open the door of the iconic William Holman-Hunt artistic interpretation of Jesus standing at the door, knocking, and let LOVE come in.

Thanks be to God,

AMEN.

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**The Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God,**

**the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

***I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.***

***He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit***

***and born of the Virgin Mary.***

***He suffered under Pontius Pilate,***

***was crucified, died, and was buried.***

***He descended to the dead.***

***On the third day he rose again.***

***He ascended into heaven,***

***and is seated at the right of the Father.***

***He will come again***

***to judge the living and the dead.***

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

Incarnation

(In joy and humility let us pray to the creator of the universe, saying, **“Lord, grant us peace.”**)

By the good news of our salvation brought to Mary by the angel, hear us, O Lord. **Lord, grant us peace.**

By the mystery of the Word made flesh, hear us, O Lord**. Lord, grant us peace.**

By the birth in time of the timeless Son of God, hear us, O Lord. **Lord, grant us peace.**

By the manifestation of the King of glory to the shepherds and magi, hear us, O Lord.

**Lord, grant us peace.**

By the submission of the maker of the world to Mary and Joseph of Nazareth, hear us, O Lord.

**Lord, grant us peace.**

By the baptism of the Son of God in the river Jordan, hear us, O Lord. **Lord, grant us peace.**

Grant that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; hear us, O Lord. Lord, grant us peace.

**COLLECT OF THE DAY:**

**Eternal God, this holy night is radiant**

**with the brilliance of your one true light.**

**As we have known the revelation of that light on earth,**

**bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly glory;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord,**

**who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,**

**one God, now and for ever. AMEN.**

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

All: **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.**

**And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**the power, and the glory,**

**for ever and ever. Amen.**

**HYMN**

BLESSING:

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless in our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. AMEN.

Let us go in peace to love and serve God and our neighbour.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia**

MERRY CHRISTMAS