

## John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

<sup>9</sup>The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. <sup>13</sup>They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

## God's Word among Us

### I.

God made it all. The very first book of the Bible, Genesis, starts with the words: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, EHV). There was nothing. There was no matter. There was no blob of something that God molded and shaped. There was nothing. Just God. Everything other than God is something that is created. All the matter God used in forming and shaping our universe was also created by God. It all had a beginning—except God.

John starts with the same words as Genesis, but gives us some more information. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1-2, EHV). John says that, even as God began the process of creation, the Word was with him. John speaks of God and the Word as two distinct persons. He says "the Word was God." Just as the person of the Creator himself, the Word is infinite and uncreated.

"Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind" (John 1:3-4, EHV). This Word which John named as a separate person was the tool God used in the process of creation. When you think of all the days of creation, God spoke and things came to be—light and darkness; sun, moon and stars; plants, trees, animals. The Word gave life to all living things, including the crown of God's creation—human beings. The Word was the tool that formed it all. As his creation came to a conclusion: "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31, EHV).

It didn't stay that way. Genesis doesn't get very far along after the beginning before human beings fell into sin. Everything changed.

### II.

The fall into sin brought darkness. Spiritual darkness. The perfect relationship human beings had with God when he created the world was gone. The world in which we live doesn't know God. Peter says: "You see, what they are intentionally forgetting is that the heavens came into existence long ago by the word of God" (2 Peter 3:5, EHV). People want to ignore what creation should be telling them: there is a God and they are accountable to that God.

John speaks about it this way. He calls the Word is called by John "...the light of mankind" (John 1:4, EHV), but "The light is shining in the darkness" (John 1:5, EHV). Darkness captures the confusion and misunderstanding and futility all around us in the world. When you walk through your house in complete darkness, even knowing generally where things are, you likely bump into walls and doorways. Spiritual darkness means that human beings can't find God, no matter how often we bump into the things God made. Paul says that those trapped in unbelief "Have traded

the truth about God for the lie, worshipping and serving the creation rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25, EHV).

### III.

God’s beautiful creation that had become so damaged by sin needed rescuing. The people trapped in sin, who so easily and naturally traded creation for a lie, just keep on bumping into false ideas about God. We just fumble around in the darkness. We needed God to point himself out to us. How would he do this?

“The Word became flesh and dwelled among us” (John 1:14, EHV). John already identified the Word. He said he was with God in the beginning. John said he *was* God—he *is* God. He participated in creation.

The Christmas Eve gospel reading is from Luke chapter 2: the familiar words of the Christmas story. Jesus was born of Mary in Bethlehem. His arrival was announced to the shepherds who were tending their flocks in a nearby field. Luke concentrates on the humanness of Jesus. He was born, just like any other baby.

John in this verse of the Christmas Day gospel concentrates on an absolutely stunning reality of Christmas: God took on human flesh. That little baby lying in the manger in Bethlehem is not *just* a baby: he is also God himself. The Word became flesh. Jesus Christ is both true God and true man in one person.

Since sinful human beings were incapable of finding God, the Creator God became a man. When God promised Moses that he would be with him and would also go with the people of Israel, Moses asked to see God and his glory. God told him: “You cannot see my face, for no human may see me and live” (Exodus 33:20, EHV).

But now, “The Word became flesh and dwelled among us” (John 1:14, EHV). The glory of God is seen in the fact of Jesus Christ. His is the light of the world. He is the light that shines in our darkness, the light no darkness can overcome, as we said in the opening sentences of our service this past Wednesday evening.

### IV.

The One who formed Adam from the dust has come with fingernails and eyebrows and knees and toes to reclaim his creation. He was born of a woman. His mother, Mary, wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger for a bed.

Jesus was. Before Abraham—before Adam, even—yet he can be found in Bethlehem as a tiny baby. As we sang in this morning’s first hymn: “O come, let us adore him!”

In today’s Second Reading the writer to the Hebrews said: “In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways” (Hebrews 1:1, EHV). We have heard from some of those prophets through the Advent season. Often they saw the first and second comings of the Messiah side by side, as if they were almost one event.

We live in between Jesus’ first and second comings, but we still use prophetic perspective when we look at the birth of Jesus. We see it with God’s goal and promise that came with the birth of the Baby in a manger. We see the One who made the forests and the mountains as the One who also came to stretch his arms out wide on a cross made of wood, raised up on a hilltop.

The Creator of heaven and earth was born as a little baby with the goal of suffering and dying for his creation. After he died, Jesus was wrapped in linen and laid in a tomb, bursting forth on the third day. He came to die and rise again for us. “O come, let us adore him!”

God, the Word, who was in the beginning, is now and forever incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. That makes Christmas a blessed surprise: the uncreated, eternal, and infinite God comes right here among us as our light and our life. “O come, let us adore him!” Amen.