

Rev. Dan Welch Advent Midweek 2 12-8-21 Text- Luke 1:28- 40

Tonight, in their anthems, we've been blessed to hear the First Lutheran

School Children tell us what Advent and Christmas are all about. "Who Are We Waiting For?", sung by the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders is an Advent Song, which has us looking forward in anticipation to the birth of Christ; His first coming, and also looking forward in faith to His Second Advent, on the last day. The third and fourth graders sang "To Us a Child Is Born", which is definitely the fulfillment of the promised birth of our Savior, Jesus at Christmas!

The Senior Choir also had two anthems to share; one covering an Advent theme and the other a Christmas theme: "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Might Gates, the King of Glory Waits", written by Georg Weissel, majestically declares of our sure and certain hope as believers of the coming of Christ. Then the beautiful Christmas song, "All Is Well" written by Michael W. Smith shares the *incomparably* Good News that all truly *is* well between God and humankind, because Christ was born for us!

I wanted to take a brief moment, and I promise it *will* be brief (!), to tie together these four anthems that the choirs have shared with us this evening, along with our two Scripture readings from Isaiah 9 and Luke 1. My goal is to

answer the “how” and the “why” of the mystery that is the birth of God. To begin to do this I would like ask you to try to picture in your mind what it would be like to try to explain to someone - who doesn't understand what Christmas is about, who has never heard of Christ, who in fact, doesn't know anything about this God, of Whom we sing in our hymns tonight, as well as the special anthems, - just exactly Who He is? How would you describe the one, true God in Whom we entrust our lives and our eternal destinies, *the* God Whom we believe, teach, and confess from the Bible and in the Creeds of the Church; the One Whom we worship and serve, and talk to in prayer.

What **words** would you even consider using to describe God? Awesome? Glorious? Eternal? Loving? Holy? All-powerful? How in the world do you describe something - Someone- who has no beginning and no end?

These are pretty deep thoughts, I know! The might and majesty of almighty God go way beyond my ability to even comprehend, let alone completely describe! And you know what? To be honest I'm glad that I can't fit my God into some little box of my **own** understanding, that there's a whole

boatload of stuff I'd like to know about the Almighty but never will **this** side of eternity.

And really this **is** a good thing. Because we have lots of words to describe God, we can never truly explain Him, describe Him, or define Him perfectly. We can only sit back and be utterly amazed that this God is the Creator of all that is—of light out of darkness, of the seas and stars and mountains and plains, of animals and plants and birds and fish, of man and woman. Out of nothing, no less! All that we see and touch and smell and hear and taste that's good—God made it, from scratch. Amazing!

And here's a little more food for thought- just a morsel, if you will: How can God—this God who is infinitely beyond all description or explanation or comprehension—**how** can God take on human flesh . . . and **why** would He do it? **How?** John, using the same words to begin his Gospel as did the writer of the book of Genesis, put it like this, "***In the beginning*** was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" . . . and the Word created life and light and everything in all creation: "and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:1, 14).

How? You know the story as well as I, and it's just as much mystery and miracle as all that has just been said. It's the story we hear in Luke's Gospel, the story of a young girl named Mary, chosen to be the human mother of this holy God, conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. And in a stable in Bethlehem, quietly and with a faithful man named Joseph looking on, God **did** take on human flesh, and His name was Jesus. **How?** It is truly a mystery and a miracle. It is the **birth** of **God!** Certainly, worthy of our thoughts, our words, and our songs of praise!

The baby's name is the clue we need to answer the question **why** God took on human flesh. *Jesus'* name literally means "The LORD Saves." The first man and woman, made in God's image, fell from holiness but not from grace. The same goes for every created human being since that first free fall into sin. The world would never be the same as when first created; sin is powerful, and sin is deadly and sin wreaks havoc on all people in all sorts of ways. The world **needed** a Savior. But the qualifications were steep: the Savior had to be someone who was still holy, without sin. But the Savior also had to be someone who would be able to endure the consequences of sin—pain and suffering and death—and then snuff out its power through the new life of resurrection.

Why did God take on human flesh? Because He loves us enough to say, “I’ll never give up on them. I’ll never leave them. I, the Father, will send them my only Son, to be born among them and to live among them and to save them from the curse of their sins.”

So it was, on that night we call Christmas, when heaven met earth. “To Us a Child Is Born” as the children sang, and because of that “All Is Well!” Amen.

God’s blessings to you and your family through the remainder of this Advent season and during the coming the season of Christmas! As the offerings are brought forward, we sing hymn number 356, “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came.”