



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person

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Sexton	John Bryant

✧ *In Worship Today* ✧

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Guest Preacher	Rev. David Hahn <i>Director of Faith Formation & Education, NWWA Synod</i>
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Gospel and Prayers	Carol Ann Davis

This service of worship can also be seen online. Go to queenannelutheran.org and click on "WORD OUT" to find audio, video, and print resources for worship at home, as well as resources to use with children.

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

January 3, 2021

"Word Out" audio transcript



Prelude

Pastorale

Domenico Zipoli (1688–1726)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this Second Sunday of Christmas, to Queen Anne Lutheran Church. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God.

In today's Gospel we hear the Great Prologue of John, a text that may well have been an early Christian hymn the author appropriated to set up his account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Here the promise of Advent is made real. Not only has the infant Jesus been born, but in him, the Eternal Word has become flesh.

Apostolic Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

G: And also with you.

Welcome to our first service of the month, our Family Service. I'm Pastor Dan, and this is our children's sermon...

Today I have a question for you about God.

If you were to describe God to me using **one word**, what would it be?

Would you say God is **almighty**? A lot of grownups would. I mean, after all, God created the whole universe! That God created the whole universe suggests that God must be almighty.

Or maybe you'd say God is **big**. God has to be greater than the universe God created, right? The universe is really big. Therefore God must be really, *really* big by comparison!

Or maybe you'd say something about God's mind, that God is **really smart**, or **all knowing**. (I recognize those are two words, each.) Surely God knows a lot. God would have to know a lot to create a universe like ours, right?

Finding words to describe God is kind of tough when you think about it, isn't it? Why do you think that is?

Maybe it's because no one has ever seen God, as our Gospel reading for today says. Another book in the Bible says that God "dwells in unapproachable light," kind of like the light of the sun. We can't approach God. We can't *see* God. So, how can we know anything *about* God?

Well the good news today is that God in Jesus Christ has showed us something about himself. It's not that he's big, almighty, or knows everything. God, rather, has become the opposite. Small for us in Jesus, showing us, in Jesus, that God is love. This makes Jesus pretty special, doesn't it?

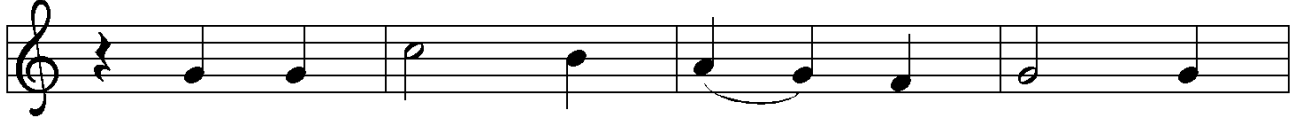
If you ever find yourself confused about who God is, turn to Jesus. He'll show you. Let's pray.


Kind and loving God, it's hard to put into words, who and what you are. But thanks be to you, you have made yourself known to us in Jesus, showing us your kindness, your love and your grace. Whenever we have questions about you, turn us to Him, that we may remember who you are.

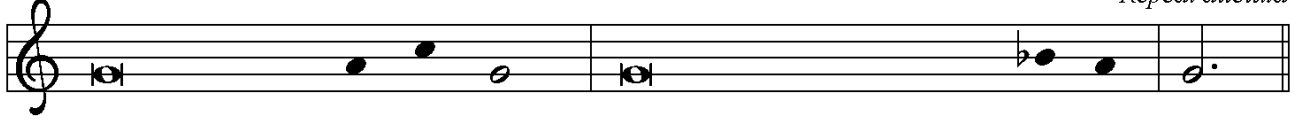
And all God's people said, Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 98:3


C: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

A: 
All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

Repeat alleluia

C: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel:

John 1:1-18

A: The Holy Gospel according to John, the first chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A: [1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2]He was in the beginning with God. [3]All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being [4]in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. [5]The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

[6]There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7]He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. [8]He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. [9]The true light,

which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

A: The Gospel of the Lord.

G: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

In the Beginning Was the Conversation

Pastor David Hahn

Grace, mercy and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

Well, Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! We've made it, all the way through 2020! Only good things ahead, hopefully. The new vaccine is on its way. And then we can perhaps be looking forward to the day where we can be face to face with one another. The stock market is at an all-time high. Stimulus checks are, perhaps, in the mail soon. . . There's a lot of newness this year.

And yet, as we look forward to what the new norm might be, or at least returning to some semblance of normalcy, there is a new Word for us, a new Word for us that we hear in today's Gospel lesson, that for us in the

life of the church we continue to receive and let that liquid gold of the Spirit of the Lord shine upon us, to fill us, to feed us.

In today's Gospel lesson this end of our Christmas season we hear from the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Over the last several years, my own imagination has actually increased to think about this text from the perspective of God's Trinitarian nature, God's communal nature, that this conversation is the life of God.

So, Martin Luther speaks about it this way in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* and he writes, "God's majesty and nature is pregnant with a Word or a conversation, in which he engages with Himself and His divine essence, and which reflects the thoughts of His heart. This is as complete and excellent and perfect as God Himself. No one but God alone sees, hears or comprehends this conversation. God's Word existed before angels and creatures existed, for subsequently He brought all creatures into being by means of this Word and conversation."

If we think about Word and conversation, perhaps another read of the Gospel of John from today's text could be, "In the beginning was the Conversation and the Conversation was with God, and the Conversation was God."

God is Conversation. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are having a conversation.

And if you actually read through the Gospel of John, this is not unusual, to think in these Trinitarian terms. Think about John 17, where Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemene, the high priestly prayer. Is he praying to himself? The Father overhears him. There is a *conversation*, not just that we hear from Jesus the Word, but that first is heard by God, Jesus's Father, mediated in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And yet conversation is not the only way to think about it. Perhaps we might also imagine "God's conversation" as a bunch of musicians, three

musicians, played out in their love for one another, that the world overhears.

One author speaks about it this way, that “God is beauty and to be God is to be enjoyed and enjoyable. In that Triune conversation is righteousness. It’s the perfect harmony of the Triune communal life. And the harmony of discourse, taken for itself, is beauty. It’s music.”

Robert Jensen goes on to say that “God is a melody. And as there are three singers who take each their part, a further specification suggests itself, that the melody is fugued.”

He says, in the close of his big theological tome, that “God is a great fugue. And there is nothing so spacious or roomy as a fugue.”

As a musician, that resonates with me. And so every place after I had kind of reimagined God in light of being a conversation, or these musicians who are playing among us, where I would find myself at concerts, I would really imagine that God was up there on the stage performing, and improvising a life of love and beauty that would pour out into those who were in the audience, and who were moved and who were touched, and who would just simply receive the goodness and the truth of what that music was.

I remember several years ago, this probably took my imagination by storm when we took students to New Orleans, and the week before we were to do some hard work in helping with the homes and restoring some of the cleanup from the hurricanes, we went to a jazz club called Preservation Hall. And it’s this old musty, small hall with an out-of-tune piano and a few wooden benches and mostly standing room only. And as the different sets went, and people left, we moved up closer and closer to the group, and soon I found myself sitting in front of the trumpet player, a guy named Dave Bartholomew, I think he was, like, 85 years old at the time, and the joy that they had in playing with each other was just beauty to watch.

And I just imagine that this, somehow, is the Word with God, that is God, playing itself out into the world.

This conversation, this Word, creates new places for us to explore life, different from those other narratives that are so much around us that we listen to. It creates new places for us to explore life as God's people in this world. So as we find ourselves in God's conversational life we in fact are opened up, opened up to new possibilities.

And what are we listening for? We're listening for the wounds around us, and within us; the gaps that dehumanize us; the fears that distance us from one another, that suffocate and overwhelm us. And yet this conversation in the Triune God that comes, breaks into our world, instead invites us to lean in with transparency and vulnerability and a true sense of hospitality, in waiting for the stranger to extend hospitality to us; as the very gift of what it means to be a community with our fellow companions.

Well this journey of being engaged in this conversational life – who God is – is just as much a personal journey as it is a collective one. And in fact for our local congregations, I really am of the opinion that it's just as much about a strong deepening of our shared personal journeys, as it is with us collectively as congregations.

And when I think about the narratives that are around us that are tempting us into other places, I'm drawn immediately to what one author, Willie James Jennings, speaks about as "self-sufficient masculinity," this temptation to preserve one's own interest and reputation at all cost, to pursue one's own goals and vision for securing our own future first. And where the values here include possession, control, and mastery over all things.

And yet, the divine conversation in the Word, that the Word opens up through the Father and the Spirit, is quite different. It is one of belonging, and learning to live together as a belonging community, not just in a local church, but with the world in responsible mutuality and freedom with one another. Not to solve one another's problems, but to make space to receive and understand one another's challenges, even as our own come to light.

There are many conversations that we should be having. There are many opportunities for us to be invited into such places.

Well, this last Sunday evening I was invited by my friend, Tammy to her Zoom birthday party. Perhaps during this time you, too, have been invited to a Zoom birthday party.

Tammy has been a good friend for many years. She was a counterpart to me in Campus Ministry years ago; she was the Episcopal counterpart. She has been one of the most thoughtful conversation partners I've had for a long, long time about what it means to be a human; about what it means to struggle in this world, in relationships.

And she gathered people from all parts of the country, right – this is the beauty of the Zoom birthday party – you can bring people from all different walks of life and just invite them to the table, from New York, from DC, from Alaska, Arizona, and from Washington. Many of us had never met.

And the only one who brought us to the table, of course, is the one who knew us. The one who had a conversation with us and invited us to open up and have conversations with one another.

Tammy is always challenging the dominant structures, especially patriarchy and its challenges of what it means to be individuals in this world, because it affects all of us. Well, I'm guessing this is probably one of the reasons that many of us are drawn to Tammy, because she's so thoughtful and reflective on the things that are standing in our way.

And yet, a few of us, as the conversation went on, began to wonder what it looks like, what healthy white masculinity even looks like in the midst of all the toxic possibilities.

And so it was interesting that she even made room for us to have this conversation on her birthday and yet I knew, and she shared, that her heart swelled, that others would even be so open to have such a transparent conversation with one another.

And one of the gentlemen said that in his community in Alaska they had started a "vulnerability group" among men to start opening up about some of the challenges that they experience and some of the expectations

about what it means to be a white male in today's world, and starting to take account for the alternatives to that life.

And so we played it out and Tammy said, "You know, I think after this call, if you're interested, I can send emails out and you can all find each other, and you can continue the conversation."

And we said, that'd be great.

There are many conversations to be had; many ways that the Word in God's conversation is creating something new ahead of us, among us and within us.

There's a lot of work to do. It's not just about action, it's about reflection. It's about trying to attend to the ways that we've already been conditioned and programmed.

And to discern that "the Word becomes flesh, and dwells among us" *is this* Word, that bears the challenges, the struggles, the suffering of the world; that longs for liberation and freedom for all people. To be invited into this conversation is to be opened up to the truth of what it actually gives: Freedom. Life. Salvation.

In Holy Baptism we are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Think of that – that in Holy Baptism, you were baptized into the conversation of God, a conversation that God had been having long before you were received into God's very life.

"The Word became flesh and lived among us." The dwelling of this Word, the dwelling of this conversation, is what we are being invited into.

So what about you? What conversation is the Word inviting you into? With whom are you being invited to broaden and deepen what counts as liberating discourse for you, your life and your community?

Perhaps our inquiry toward these questions is what the emerging Epiphany season now following Christmas will begin to open up for us. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

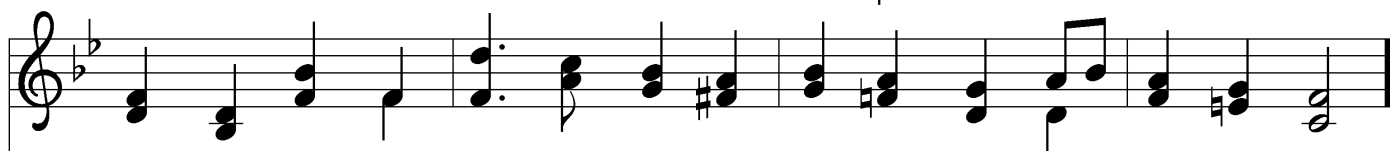
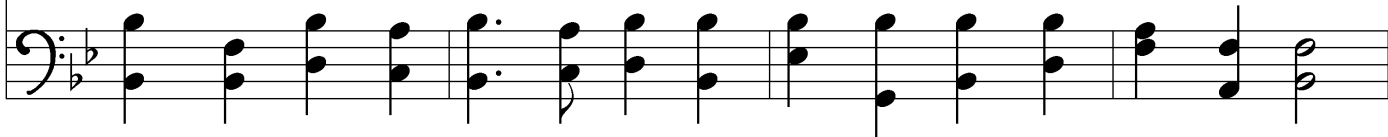
Angels from the Realms of Glory

stanzas 1, 3 & 4

ELW 275



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.



Refrain



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.



Prayers of the Church

A: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

A: Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and the misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For whom or what else do the people of God pray?

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

A: Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in the life to come. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

G: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

G: **Our Father in heaven,**

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread,

and forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever.

Amen.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

P: Receive now the blessing:

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

C: **Amen.**

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Postlude on REGENT SQUARE
(quoting “For Unto Us a Child Is Born,”
from *Messiah*, G. F. Handel, 1685–1759)
Edwin C. Johnson (20th century)

About Today’s Music

Today is the tenth day of the twelve days of Christmas. The prelude is a *pastorale* – a piece of music intended to evoke scenes of the countryside. When my first organ teacher, David Dahl (who performed the dedicatory recital of the Wech organ at QALC), assigned me this piece, I remember that he associated it with the scenes of the Christmastide narrative. If you are listening with young children, ask them what they “see” as they listen to the three short sections of the piece – perhaps shepherds reclining watchfully on the hills, angels flitting boisterously across the skies, and Magi swaying regally upon their camels! – Cantor Kyle