

## First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."  
<sup>8</sup>Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the Lord to Zion.  
<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup>The Lord has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

## Gospel: John 1:1-14

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

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

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

<sup>14</sup>And 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.

## Sermon

December 25, 2022

Pastor Kristy Daniels

Merry Christmas!

Today we celebrate what has been done for us, what has been given to us, and we celebrate not so much the Child born, but the gift of life given in His death and resurrection.

In the waters of baptism, we were put to death and raised to new life as children of God, inheritors of this promise of light, and life, and salvation; knit together as the Body of Christ into a community of love and forgiveness and support and truth – that we cannot do this on our own.

We celebrate this Christmas Day with the *third* creation story. Anybody know there were *three* creation stories here in this Bible? So, there's two in Genesis: the first two chapters of Genesis tell different stories. And then we have this very beautiful telling about the Word. And as Lutherans, we talk about a Triune God, and we say that God was together from the beginning of time, and this is one of the texts that knits that all together.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was “moving over the deeps,” right, in the Old Testament Genesis story. It is the Word that gives us life. And we say we know *Jesus* to be that Word for us.

“This is my body broken for you. This is my blood poured out for you” – some of the words he shares with us. “You are my beloved child,” as he raises you up out of the waters of baptism and claims you as his own; “Your sins are forgiven.” These are the kinds of words that Jesus shares with us that bring life; that sustain, that give meaning to each day, that provide hope in this darkness – because there was not just darkness in *this* time, a people who had been longing and waiting for a Savior. There's been darkness from the beginning of time, and not necessarily as an evil, but here in the world, as a part of creation.

And how are we going to live in that, as children of God?

We are called to live with hope, in faithfulness, rejoicing in what we have received – this free gift. We are to live for the sake of the other, looking outward, outside of ourselves, for the sake of all creation.

It does not diminish or deny our own suffering and pain and need. Rather, it recognizes it. God sees us, each of us, for exactly who we are and what we need. God did not create us to be alone. He created us to be in relationship, in community, where we are known, where we can see the true self of the other, where we can accompany and encourage and be present, where we can be reminded daily that we are not alone,

where we can rejoice fully in victories, and delight in whatever may come our way – “It’s Friday!” – Things like that. (It’s not Friday today – you know I’m a little tired, but I’m not that tired!)

Emmanuel – God with us – walking this journey with us so that we can put faithfully one foot in front of the other, where we can greet the stranger, or we can live in hope, and we can work towards peace.

Where we, as Al shared with us today, can have “beautiful feet.” Did you catch that? “Those who bring good news” – they have beautiful feet! Bear in mind that this would not have been a person who would judge their feet to be beautiful. They had not had a pedicure lately; they had been running across the mountains, in bare feet probably, or with sandals, to declare the good news.

Emmanuel, God with us! The One we have been longing for, the One we have been waiting for, the One who unites us and makes us whole, the One who gives us purpose and meaning and mission, who sends us out into the world for the sake of the world.

Merry Christmas!

Emmanuel!

Amen!