December 31, 2023 **LONG AWAITED GIFT**

We proclaim God’s word in our life in many ways; sometimes with words, sometimes with our actions, not because we have seen Jesus in a manger visibly, but we have seen Him through God’s word. We have heard it and we know it is true. We believe it in our hearts by God's grace and this is our true joy today and every day.

In the gospel reading St. John 1:1-18, we read, In the beginning God said “Let there be light, and there was light”

• And God saw that all that He had created was good and He walked with Adam in the cool of the day in the Garden. Then with one act of disobedience sin entered in the world and there was DARKNESS

• First came Abraham who was told to leave his country and family and travel to a land that God would give to him as an inheritance – and light shined dimly

• Jacob wrestled with God and had his name changed and the light got brighter as He was told that his family would inherit the land He stood on.

• Joseph was used to keep the people alive in Egypt – and the light remained

• Moses came and brought the people home and gave them the law – and the light was brighter

• The Kings and the Judges shined the lights – most of the time

• The prophets continued to point the people to the Light – sometimes they listened

Then there were 400 years of DARKNESS. Then the people saw a star in the east – that moved to the place where the true light entered the world – and the light was in the world.

John writes to us that Jesus came into the world to show everyone what God is like and what the message looks like in flesh and blood. This baby changed everything because Jesus, the Baby, is God in the flesh who has come to His creation to give his all.  Jesus came from the Father, Full of Grace, and Truth. How long have you been a Christian? If it has been a while, then you may have one of the problems I have noticed in myself. It gets easy to read the Christmas story and say, Yeah, yeah, I know that already…and miss the wonder of that day over 2000 years ago. Jesus coming is amazing in itself!

• Jesus has always been – there has never been a point in history where Jesus had to be created or born – He existed in the beginning (Genesis says that God said, “let us make man in our image” – that is Jesus and in Colossians it tells us that all things were made through Jesus and for Jesus.

• Jesus is God – Not separate or inferior to God, but God in the flesh, the son who is savior and redeemer of all creation. When the disciples ask to see God Jesus answered them by saying

John 14:8-9 (NIV) Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

The WORD became flesh – the unique (begotten or one and only) son of God became flesh for us – full of the character of God – Grace and Truth – He came from God – His origin is clear, and His character is the same as God. Why did Jesus come in the flesh?

• He came in the flesh so that we could identify with Him – He has been tempted in every way we are without giving in to sin, there is nothing we go through that he doesn’t understand and because this is true, we can come knowing he knows what we are going through. He came in the flesh so that we could see the message of Love up close – Jesus showed us how God would live in our place. Jesus came in the flesh because the sacrifice must mean something.

If you would like to know more about Jesus Christ, please join us in our worship on Sunday at 11:00 AM.

Happy New Year 2024!

Peace!

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ponnuraj, Minister

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