

The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Day • December 25, 2016

St. John's Lutheran Church, Alexandria, VA

Rev. Braun Campbell

John 1:1-14

“Family Life: The Son From the Father”

Let's keep it simple this Christmas.

We bid farewell to a year it seems few people will miss. We have heard story upon story this year about how bad things are now and how dark the future could soon be. But the stories of this passing year are not all that new. They are stories of loss and want. They are stories of selfishness and shortsightedness. They are stories of violence and fear. They are the stories of people who need a Savior.

Here in these days of winter, we gather to hear a story. It is the true story handed down to us across the ages of a child born in a little village in a foreign culture in another era. It is the true story of God stepping into His Creation. It is the true story of hope fulfilled, of love revealed, and of relationships restored. It is the true story about Jesus.

To really know God, we must know Jesus.

This Christmas, know Jesus by looking to manger of Christmas, but do not stop there. The Christmas story comes up short if we fail to see where it goes. Know Jesus by looking to his life and teaching, for they show what life is supposed to look like. Know Jesus by looking to the cross of Good Friday, for it shows how greatly God wants us all to be a part of His family. Know Jesus by looking to the empty tomb of Easter, for it shows us that he is the Savior who defeated sin and death, and now lives. Know Jesus by looking to his body and blood given at his table, for it is a glimpse of the reunion to come.

The story of Christmas centers on a gift, one that came wrapped in swaddling cloths. The Father sent His Son to be the Savior, born as those He would save. In the manger at Bethlehem, we have seen God's glory; we witness the public demonstration of God's power. The Word who created the world became one of us and took up residence among us. He did all this so that we might be His own.

Jesus, the Savior, came to live your life so that you could have *his* life with the Father.

That is the gift of Christmas. The Son came from the Father to make possible restored relationships between the created and the Creator. The Son came from the Father to bring light into our darkness. The Son came from the Father so that we might have life as it was meant to be: as family.

What does your family's story say about you? Do you embrace that story or run away from it?

You are a part of Jesus' family. You are a part of his story. And his story speaks volumes about you, for Jesus is the full gift of the truth of God's love for you.

This Christmas, let us live in that love. The Son has taken our sin-broken connection with God and restored it to wholeness, so we might live as children of the Father, as members of His family. He has given us compassion. He has given us patience. He has given us joy. He has given us love. He has given us life.

This is the story of Christmas: **God has come to make us family.**

Amen.