

Christmas Eve 2012 – Call to Worship

Welcome to this service. Welcome home.

Tonight I invite you into grace - a place just to be.

You don't have to do one thing right now - except be here.

If you want to sing with us please do.

If you need to sit in the warmth and let the music wash over you, please do.

You are home and there is not one thing you need to do or be at this moment. Except be you and be here and ...be.

SILENCE

For those of you who would like to come on this adventure as old as time.

Let's begin.

Tonight I'm going to invite you to look up. This has been the theme of our preparations here in this church. Look up, Luke told us at the beginning of Advent. Look up.

And so once more....

Look up – what does that mean? Look up. Look up at those stars, take the long view....look up and into the future, the future that is so shimmering and fragile before us

look up with the confident eyes not of spectators but as participants, co-creators, those to whom a promise has been given.

let yourself be drawn into the mystery of it all

open your arms wide, wide, to encompass, to embrace it all.

and then.....

then gather it in

gather it into yourself, wrap it in swaddling bands and hold it in your arms like the gift that it is

and move away tonight from looking up...and

look down. After all the time we spent during Advent looking up,

now is the time to look down.

Look down. Look at the child. Watch the father as he extends his rough carpenter's finger and the tiny fist closes around it....grasps, and is reassured. That moment, my friends, is large.

Grasping – connecting - that's what it's about, is it not?

In the end life is about reassurance....we all need a sign that we're not alone. A bond, and anchor, holding us fast to something larger than ourselves. Not an idea, not a concept, not a theory but warm,

human flesh. Skin against skin. A physical knowing. The warmth of it moves along our veins, a gentle strong assurance that we are not alone.

Tonight is a night for grasping, reaching out for something beyond us and yet so close as to be right here. Something that wakens us to life that is deeper, sharper, grounded and holy.

There will be those among us here who have nearly lost our will to grasp. The simple, primal will to grasp. To hang on – to life, to hope....

I'm asking you to reach out one more time. Take a chance on the world – as God, in this tiny squirming creature, takes a chance on us.

Give us one more chance, will you?

There are so many questions, that I know.

We can look up and we can scan the sky for answers – for angel choruses or stars that lead the way... and too often no angels sing, no stars shine clear enough for certitude.

We see in the patterns of the stars constellations of meaning
but maybe

maybe looking up we can connect those shining dots in a different way
and forge a future until now unimagined

There are questions, and there are choices. And perhaps, for now, that's all we have.

That is not reason for despair. It is reason for hope.

Perhaps those questions, those untilted choices
are themselves the angels we have sought, and sought, and missed.

Do you think that might be true?

We can't know everything – and some days it seems we can't know anything.

But we can choose to look down, to do small things, with great love. We can start by reaching out. Grasping. Allowing that there is One among us in whom our questions can rest.

The Mystery that moves the sun and the stars is here among us
grasping, closing a tiny fist around us
and saying hold on.

God, the Lord of Hosts, the Almighty, the Divine

is here when we look down

here in each new life

vulnerable, inarticulate, helpless, and marked, even to the marrow of these tiny bones
marked with the pain and the glory of being alive.

Reaching out.

I'm asking you to look down now and reach back. What have you got to lose?