

Luke 2: 1-20
Creekside COB
December 24, 2008
Christmas Eve

“God Has An Address”

I want you to think of something that the following places have in common:

- a farm
- a car dealership
- an apartment complex
- numerous family residences
- a church
- a Dollar General store
- a McDonald’s
- The White House

What is the common thread? Each has the same address -- *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*. The White House is the residence of the most powerful person in the world. The others are places where unknown and unheralded people live, work, shop, and worship.

God bore a hole in the heavens and came down to us. God did not land in Rome or Jerusalem, the centers of political and religious power. God did not lay his sweet head in the White House, at 10 Downing Street, in the Temple, or the Roman Senate.

We come to Christmas with anticipation and the benefit of historical hindsight. But no one anticipated Jesus’ advent. There was no advanced planning. The headline in the Bethlehem Star did not read, *“Bethlehem Abuzz as the Messiah’s Arrival Nears.”* He was born on a night like another other. The townspeople had settled in for the evening. Houses grew dark as lamps were extinguished. A few dogs were barking. Singing and laughter spilled into the street from the bar inside the Bethlehem Inn.

The second chapter of Luke records what was going on at the time. Caesar Augustus was Emperor. Quirinius was governor of Syria. Joseph and pregnant Mary took a ninety-mile trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be “enrolled” for tax purposes. Shepherds kept an eye on their flocks. The air wasn’t charged with electricity. There was no way to tell *something was brewing*.

On this night forty years ago, three astronauts orbited the moon. You may recall that Frank Borman read the creation story of Genesis from lunar orbit. His crewmember, Jim Lovell took a never-before-seen picture that changed his life -- the earth rising over the moon’s horizon. We’ve all seen it, but I want you to imagine words at the bottom of the picture. “Trouble Brewing,” it says. Trouble is brewing in every direction. We could also insert the line from a county song by Kitty Wells did a song that reflects what we feel -- “... *heartaches by the number, troubles by the score.*”

But despite the present mess, or maybe because of it, hope *still* shines on Christmas Eve-- hope that makes belief attractive, even to the hardest skeptics. People more pliable on Christmas Eve. Impossible things seem a little less impossible.

The epistle to the Hebrews says, “*In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days has spoken to us by a son*” (Hebrews 1: 1-2). Tonight, the church, *in many and various ways* struts its stuff and proclaims, “Hey, world! Christ is born!”

Christmas reveals an irony. Overwhelmed by the torrential trouble of our broken world, people are seeking the “spiritual.” Thinking the answer to the deepest questions is found “beyond” the confines of the world, we want a ticket to leave the mess. We find ourselves singing, “I’m just a stranger here, this world is not my home.” But while trying to get out of the grip of this flesh-bound, fractured, fallen world, we pass the Word coming the other way.

John's gospel doesn't begin with Jesus' birth. It begins with the Word. "In the beginning was the Word... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). We couldn't get to God, so God came to us. The Word let out a cry in Bethlehem and was wrapped tight in rags and laid in a cattle trough. The Word cried when hungry. The Word had dirty diapers. The Word cried when it skinned its knees and Mary kissed it. The Word said, "*Blessed are the poor and the peacemakers... You have heard it said of old, but I say to you...*" The Word bled when nails were pounded into it. The Word became a human being.

The flesh and blood house we live in has its hungers and passions. It's emotions can either enrich or enslave. It can do amazing things, but as it ages, eyesight gets fuzzy. Joints give out and arthritis moves in. It's memory fades, and its memory fades, too. The day will come when we will vacate the premises. Yet, it was a flesh and blood house God moved into. The Word came down and adorned itself in a human being with a face, a name and an address.

The joy of Christmas is the knowledge that we don't have to leave the world for some ethereal, spiritual realm to find God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. "Dwelt among us" in Greek, means, "to pitch a tent." God made his home among us and within us to show that God is for us.

In Lincoln, Nebraska a judge threw out a Nebraska legislator's lawsuit designed to draw attention to frivolous lawsuits. Eric Chambes filed the suit seeking a permanent injunction against God. Chambers said God made threats against him and his Omaha constituents, inspired fear and caused "*widespread death, destruction and terror among billions of the Earth's inhabitants.*" But District Court Judge Marlon Polk said the suit could not be filed because the Almighty did not have a *listed home address.*

Judge Polk obviously has not heard. God has an address. It doesn't have numbers. Since sending us Jesus, *our Father whom art in heaven* has established residence in the world, in our hearts, in unexpected places -- even the places where it seems God never bothered to show up.

And the world became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory and we know that all will be well.