

# What's The Word Again?

Sermon Notes for Dec 10, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 85 (532) & Isaiah 40:1-11 (979)



**Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all the people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.**

**(Isaiah 40:5)**

## Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Yesterday, this contemporary rendering of how the nativity might happen today popped up on my Facebook feed – it's by Everett Patterson, a comic book author and illustrator living in Portland, Oregon – he imagines a comfortable couple in their car seeing this scene as they rush by on the way to the mall – here's the link if you want to go and examine the rich messages in the image more carefully - <http://www.everettpatterson.com/?p=1835> – my intent in using this image this morning is to provoke afresh the idea that God's coming is not simply in the past, but is a very contemporary reality – and he comes in ways we least expect, in places that surprise us, and with a Word that disrupts our comfort and complacencies
- But what is that Word? – what do we wait for during Advent this year? – what lies behind all the busyness and bustle that exhausts us at this time of year? – for an increasing number, it's a secular holiday centred on gift-getting – some people now even insist that Santa Claus is a secular symbol, completely unaware of his Christian roots in St. Nicholas, the bishop of Myra in present-day Turkey in the early 300s, renowned for his secret gift-giving – for these folks, there is no Word of God at Christmas - for Christians, however, there is – and it's a Word that is crucial to the well-being of the creation
- the Word we await and celebrate through Advent and Christmas is captured beautifully in our Call to Worship this morning – it is the revelation of God's steadfast love and the gift of salvation that flows from it – and that 'Word' is first and foremost a person – Jesus of Nazareth, the One anointed by this God to show us the straight way in the midst of the wilderness where we wander, longing for our true home – Jesus is the one who embodies God's loving home – our true home is found in relationship with him, in working with him for his Commonwealth

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- For far too many in our cities around the world, that home is a temporary shelter on a cold, rainy night that might just have room in a corner for a young couple – or a temporary tent in a refugee camp crowded with the traumatized fleeing the innumerable wars raging around the world – or a heating grate in a back alley where a young girl curls up in a fetal pose as she wonders what to do now that she has fled an abusive family – or a darkened room behind a locked door where an old man struggles with inner demons who besiege his dignity – or the particular wilderness that you face today
- The Word that God has been speaking ever since we began rebelling against the constraints that guarantee wholesome flourishing for human beings is Love – it flows from God's steadfast love and flows into our salvation – it is for the PEACE of the whole creation, which is God's ultimate delight – it invites us to stop the car, pull a U-turn, and offer the Holy Family a place in which that Word can be birthed – is there a couch or a floor or a spare room in your home where this Word can come to life again this year? – in that external space, can you feel the compassion of God, offering God's PEACE, coming into your souls?

### **So, what are we going to do with this ...**

Chances of us driving by a couple like the one in Paterson's image may be slim – but his comments about doing something provoke us to see things differently – a radio interview with a guy who carries socks around and hands them out to those who might need them – so let's go out from our worship this morning looking more keenly for those places in our lives where God's Word of steadfast love and salvation can make a difference – and know that the Spirit will guide you into the right response

### **Your Notes ...**

### **Framework for our Prayers**

**Thanks** – for the persistence and diverse ways in which you confront and comfort us with your Word, your presence ...

**Help** – we remember in deep sadness the violence that traumatizes so many in our world – especially, this week, those who mourn those killed in the Montreal Massacre 28 years ago and in the Sandy Hook School Shooting 5 years ago – heal the despair we so often feel these days with your hope ...

**Awe** – the ingenious ways you devise to get your Word into our lives – into our hearts, our minds, our guts – all with the intent of healing us into your hope for the world ...

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