Springfield Presbyterian Church

January 1st, 2023 - Christmastide

Love Begotten

1. Introduction

Every Christmas, when we use our Lessons and Carols liturgy, we

find that our lesson ends with John 1:1-15, which we heard poetically this morning. It might seem strange because the other lessons we hear are the narrative of Jesus’ entry into this world.

 We read this text because it gives us a much broader view of the life of Jesus. Jesus is not only this narrative we find in our Gospels, but Jesus has been here before the world began. Jesus was here before the days of creation we hear in Genesis. He was here before people, animals, dawn and dusk, before any plant matter – begotten, not made.

 Before Adam and Eve left Eden, or the walls of Jericho came down, or Moses led the people out of exile, or David came to be in power – something greater was happening within the Heavens. The Trinity – God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit – Three-in-One were already at work. There are hints all around the Old Testament of this one who was to come into the world but was not yet seen by humanity.

 So, my friend, Sarah, who so beautifully wrote that poem we just heard was right. We can’t start with the Magi or sheep, or even the stable story. Love was here before the beginning of time.

1. Application

Yet, while beautifully spoken, what does all this mean for you

and for me? It means that God knew that we needed Jesus way before we knew we needed Him ourselves. Isn’t that the way with so many things in this world? We’re often the last to know what we each individually need, but God knew before all time that the darkness would become so threatening that we would need the light of Jesus to come and renew and restore us.

 There’s something compelling about a God who knows us better than we know ourselves. This reality also holds another insight for us: the need to expand our knowledge of Scripture. We need the stories of the Old Testament awakened for us to know why Jesus was called to come into this world in the first place. The Old Testament gives us some of the most basic ingredients into human nature and what it looks like to live in the Kingdom of God. When we ground ourselves in Scripture, we can see to a greater extent why it was so important for Jesus to come into the world in this time and place.

1. Practicality

So, given what it means for us, how does that change today,

especially as we face a new year of life. We remember and hold these things to be true:

 We were loved by God before we even knew we needed Jesus to break open our hearts and lives.

 We walk around this world, illuminated still by the Advent candles that are lit within us:

 We choose peace instead of discord, seeking to find new ways to work together to seek unity amid our differences.

 We choose hope, even when the darkness looks like it will take over, because we know that the light will always overcome it.

 We choose joy, relentless joy, as we seek to look at our world with gratitude and the many ways God is at work within our lives.

 We choose love because love was made manifest, since the beginning of all time, and from that love, we become love-bearing people as we live and breathe.

 Above all, at the center of the candles, we remember the Christ candle, the Love that shows us a new way of living.

 May God bless you as you begin this new year, set on the path for hope, peace, joy, and love to abide, and may Christ be the Love that lights the path for all of our days to come. Amen.