

Sermon for Christmas Day—“I Am—With Us”

Christmas Day, Year A—Texts: John 1:1-14; Luke 2:1-20

Who are you, God? The people of the Old Testament asked. God replied: “I Am.” “I Am Who I Am.” “Yahweh” I am the source of all life from electrons and atoms to tadpoles and dolphins, to turtles and alligators, to flowers, corn and trees, to squirrels and elephants, to meerkats and giraffes—and to human beings of every shape, size and color, to planets, stars, galaxies and the universe itself. “I AM” the source of all life. “I Am” the silent presence in your midst. “I Am” love, drawing all things into the fullness of life.

Today, we celebrate one of the greatest mysteries in our beliefs about God. We believe that the God, “I AM”, chose to enter fully into our humanity by becoming one with us in the person of Jesus Christ. Why? Why would God do such a thing? If we believe that God is already in our midst as our very lifeline, why take on a human form? I’ll say it this way: Because we are human, we understand humans. It seems that God chose to become one with us in order to show us the way, to teach us how to live and love; to be all we’ve been created and called to be. As humans we could better understand the message in our human way of learning.

In choosing to become one of us, “I AM” entered into the fullness of the human experience. Through Jesus, God joined in on our lives from our point of view. In Jesus, God lived as humans do, from the helplessness of infancy, to being loved and rejected, to suffering a violent death on the cross. Through Jesus, God shared with us what was best for us to be and do. In looking at the life of Jesus, we can be confident that God understands our limitations, our temptations, our suffering and our joy. Jesus gave us a picture of God’s love in action.

I believe that God is always with us, the one who gives us life in the first place. But I also believe that in overflowing love God has chosen to be intimately involved in our lives, by living in our midst in the person of Jesus. God has chosen to live the way we live with our joys and suffering, health and pain, acceptance or rejection. That is the mystery we celebrate this morning. This is “I AM” right here in our midst “where two or three are gathered in my name.”

In the words of the prophet Zephaniah, we have reason to rejoice on this happy morning: **“The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; God will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you with love, God will sing joyfully because of you as one sings at festivals.”** Brothers and sisters, it is Christmas day, let us sing and rejoice in the love of our God! Let us raise our voices and our hearts in gratitude to our God who loves and understands us in our best moments and more importantly, in our worst ones.

Thanks be to God. Who has done great things for us, and who has filled us with joy.

Amen and amen.