

**The Nativity of Our Lord**  
**Cycle C**  
**December 25, 2021**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: **Isaiah 52:7 – 10.**

*God has rolled up God's sleeves and all see God's muscled arm.*

Psalm: **Psalm 98:1, 2 – 3, 3 – 4, 5 – 6.**

*All the ends of the Earth have seen the saving power of God.*

2nd Reading: **Hebrews 1:1 – 6.**

*God has always spoken to us through many and varied ways.  
but now through the Christ.*

Gospel: **John 1: 1 – 18.**

*God's Word existed from the beginning and became flesh for us  
salvation.*

God is good, **All the time**; All the time, **God is good**.

Merry Christmas my friends! What a privilege it is to spend time reflecting on the mystery of the incarnation. Why do we get so excited at Christmas time? Seems like even more so than at Easter. For me it goes back to my childhood and the Christmas traditions we grew up with. Santa always knew the good things we had done but also the mistakes we had me (like my D in conduct in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) and he would have us pray and sing and always after *Silent Night* the door between the Kitchen and the living room was unlocked and the youngest could enter first and it was a really wow experience. I still remember my Lionel train running under the tree with smoke billowing out of the stack. Merry Christmas! We got gifts because God gifted us with life, because God loved us like crazy. Such good memories.

So, what did our lectionary planners want us to see? The prophet Isaiah is filling the exiled Israelites with hope of a marvelous leader in the line of David who led and shepherd them to God's holy mountain were there

will be singing and praising to the glory of God. It will be “beautiful” to behold or a “merry” time.

St. Paul in his priestly letter to the Hebrews reminds us that in the end this whole world will be in the hands of the Christ; but in the meantime (or as Stephen Colbert says, “Meanwhile”) it is left in our hands to make ready for him. The world is ours. What are we doing with it? Grabbing or sharing? Celebrating or criticizing? Investing our talents or burying them in the ground? Blessing or cursing? Usually on Christmas day we are on our best behavior, giving freely and forgiving lavishly. Then we take down the tree and all the decorations and forget about the baby born in a manger next to piles of cow dung. This Christmas spirit isn’t meant to be abnormal. It should not be put away with the last ornament or discarded with the shredded pine trees. Time remains in our custody from creation to kin-dom coming. What are we doing to build Christ’s Kin-dom, what Martin Luther King referred to as the Beloved Community? Christmas reminds us of God’s great love for us and how we are to treat each other. Love is the key! This is the hope of Christmas.

Then for our Gospel we had this piece from John’s Gospel. When I was a kid this (in its short form) was read at the end of every mass. Hence it was referred to as the last Gospel. A trivia question: Where in the New Testament is baseball referred to? John 1:1 “In the big inning” ok it is sick. These same three words that kick off John’s Gospel also kick off the creation story in Genesis. So, if I asked for sentence completion and I said in the beginning you answer was the word. Or God created the world. Either would be correct and this is not lost on John. For John this same Word became sinful flesh for the redemption of this world. This is the heart of the incarnation: the divine and the human meet. We glimpse our destiny. This is awesome stuff, wow. Same reaction the youngest child had when opening the kitchen door at my childhood home.

My friends, the God who was and who is and who is to come is speaking to us each and every day. As we celebrate the birth of our savior today, let us take this joy and carry it throughout the year. Let us receive the presence of God every moment of every day. God is speaking to us. Let us Listen. My friends God-is-With-us, we should wake each and every morning wake up and just exclaim “WOW!” Merry Christmas.

**God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good.**