

November 29, 2020 | Sanctuary & Journey worship services

TEXT: [John 1:1-14](#)

TITLE: The Word Becomes Flesh Again: Making a Home Among Us

By the Rev. BJ Woodworth

Story of running away from home

- How many of you when you were kids “ran away from home?”
- I remember two times I ran away from home:
 - To the car and
 - To the bushes
- In the children’s book, *A Baby Sister for Frances*, she packs her whole backpack and runs away from home to under the dinning room table

One of the ways we understand the mystery of Advent, Christmas and the incarnation of Jesus, the Christ, is by, Jesus leaving his home, becoming a human being and making his home among us.

- Jesus, the Christ, has existed from the beginning of time and always at home within the Trinity. There was not a time when Jesus was not at home dwelling within the Godhead.
- Jesus’ home was and is perfect, whole, holy, and harmonious.
- Jesus’ home was and is a beautiful picture of family where everyone always gives one to the other, always listen to one another and always loves one another. There is no division in the home of the Trinity. There are never arguments or disagreements only mutual loving faithfulness to one another.
- Jesus home is so good that we can say it is perfect, complete and flawless.
- Jesus left his perfect, loving and faithful home to make his home among us, the very home he created.

Question: Have you ever lived in someone else’s home for an extended period of time? It’s challenging. (*Kids coming home for college*)

The fact the Jesus moves into our neighborhood, that he comes down, humbles himself, empties himself out of love for us ought to stun us, amaze us, befuddle us and even overwhelm us.

Out of pure, heartbreaking parental and familial love, Jesus came into our home where there is, risk, vulnerability, violence, disappointment, betrayal, pain, suffering, so that we might come to be at home within his home of the Trinitarian family, which is in fact our home away from home, the home that has always been within us and yet so far from us.

A 5th Century monk name Mark the Ascetic puts it this way:

“Keep the humility of our Lord in your heart and never forget it... Jesus took upon himself, becoming what we are, so that we might become what He is. The Word became man, so that man might become Word. Being rich he became poor for

our sakes, so that through his poverty we might become rich (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). In his great love for [us] He became like us so that through every virtue we might become like him" (Philokalia, pg. 155).

Jesus making his home among us should not be understood solely as Him coming down and descending to us, as God, but also lifting up of our humanity into the divine life. In God's great love for us He became like us so that we might become like God.

Jesus made his home among us to exalt our humanity to its rightful place, to the way we were created to be, like him, made in God's image, at home within ourselves, with the world and in God.

Listen to what some of the early church writers say about this one little verse, John 1:14, "the Word became human and made his home among us."

- Jesus was made man so that we might be made god (Athanasius) increasing what is ours while not diminishing what is his (Gregory the Great).
- Jesus "enriched our nature by joining himself with us" (Cyril of Alexandria).
- "By becoming flesh [Jesus] healed our flesh, which had been blinded by sin and death but now, can see his glory" (Augustine).

Jesus left this home to give us his very self, exalt us and lift us up and impart his very divine nature unto us, restoring our birthright as humanly divine image bearers, just like Him.

Not only does Jesus make his home among us but also makes his home in us!

Jesus left his perfect and loving home in communion with the Father and the Spirit to make his home on earth and to make his home in us!

Paul says it this way: "...we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord." (Eph 2:20-21)

The God who made the world and everything in it... does not live in temples or houses built by human hands... For in God, we live and move and have our very being, because we are the house in which God lives by the Spirit. (cf. Acts 17:24; 28)

God, through Jesus and in the Spirit has made his home in us!

We all like Mary have the Holy Spirit coming to us and inviting us to become the home, the womb, allowing God to take up residence within us as the dwelling place of God. So that, we become "partakers in God's divine nature" bearing God to the world.

And..., like Mary, in order to become the house and the dwelling place of God we must choose to partake, we must be willing, we must, like Mary say yes, yield to God's will and follow his Word.

This is Mary's witness to us. When the angel Gabriel came to Mary, she was, unsure, suspicious, overwhelmed and confused and asked, "how can this be, how can this plan work?" But Gabriel encourages her, reminding her that she has found favor with God and the Holy Spirit would accomplish this, and therefore nothing is impossible with God.

And Mary wondered... pondered... questioned... and discerned... but at the end of the conversation, she humbly said, "Here I am, may it be unto me according to your word!" Becoming the home of God involves honesty, humility, courage, trust and intentionally opening ourselves to receive the divinely given gift.

Receiving the divinely given gift of the incarnation, God making God's home among us and with us requires our intentionality. Intention fueled by grace awakens in us, day by day, moment by moment, year by year, an awareness that God is in fact dwelling within us and is at home within us. That our sense of homesickness and homelessness that has been calling to us in the depths of our being is being fulfilled.

Our intention to receive and consent to the divine indwelling of Advent and Christmas can be enacted in simple, regular and yet deliberate spiritual practices, the remind us, awaken us from our sleep and attune us to God's indwelling presence.

Perhaps one of the silver linings of this pandemic is that our corporate spiritual practices, like lighting the Advent candles (normally done together in the church building in worship together) have to be moved out into our homes. We must think about what it means to be the church scattered, not just gathered!

So, this advent season, you have the opportunity to intentionally consecrate your physical home, and the home of your life - body, soul and mind - as the dwelling place of God. Daily awakening to receive the divinely given gift of Jesus making his home among us and the Spirit making us her home.

We have made available to you advent boxes filled with ideas on how you can make your home the sanctuary of God in this Advent season, lighting your candle not just once a week but daily, reading, praying and engaging in spiritual practices through the devotional book, slowing down, doing crafts with family, friends and partners to intentionally remind ourselves and remember that while we cannot gather we are still the dwelling place of God, while we are scattered.

Closing Questions:

- How do you and your household want to consecrate some intentional space within yourselves and your physical home for God this advent season?

- What rooms of your house may have gone unattended for some time and are in need of more hope, more peace, more joy and more love? What would it look like to grant God access to those rooms?
- Finally, are there other people you are being invited to make space for in yourself or your home this advent season—perhaps those forgotten, alone and neglected?

Friends, this Advent season may our vision of Jesus, the Christ be magnificent and glorious AND may our vision of ourselves united with Jesus, the Christ be equally magnificent and glorious. God's desire and plan is for the fullness of God's presence to dwell, abide and live in each and every one of OUR LIVES... AS GOD'S HOME. May it be So!