

Christmas Day 2022

Baltic Lutheran Church

John 1:1-14

"The Word is Jesus" Sermon by Pastor Randall J. Questad

Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ who is born to you this day. Amen.

Let me give you a few hints to come up with this word that I am looking for. Hint #1 In the beginning was the Word. #2 The Word was with God. #3 The Word was God #4 This Word is the light that shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. #5 This Word was in the World and the world did not know him. #6 This Word became flesh and lives among us. It is a five-letter word beginning with J and has an S in the middle and another S at the end. What is the Word? "JESUS"

Although these first 14 verses from the gospel of John may sound like a riddle or like a code you need to decipher, and you cannot find this 5-letter word in any of these 14 verses, the answer is clear. **JESUS** is the **WORD** that became flesh and lives among us.

In the Introduction to Confirmation Class that I teach for sixth graders, we spend one class covering an overview of the bible. I begin by asking them what the word of God is and the first answer that they most often give is the bible. Then, we compare the first three words of Genesis and the first three words of the gospel of John. These students discover these three words are identical. "In the beginning." John teaches that the Word of God was in the beginning with God when he created all things. It would seem then that God was using the bible as an instruction manual or recipe book for how he was going to go about creating the world and all that was in it. John however teaches that the Word of God is not a **thing** such as a book, but it is a **who** and these young students quickly learn that whenever they are asked "What is the Word of God?" it is not the bible, it is Jesus. John declares now that Jesus has come down from heaven and there is no more wondering about who or what the word of God is. There is only one answer. Jesus.

In late July this past year, as I along with the Northern Rim Youth Group were on a bus for some 16 hours riding out to western Montana over the course of two days, we had plenty of time to play games, visit with people we hadn't gotten to know yet, read, or catch up on sleep. On one part of the trip, I was sitting across the aisle of the bus from Pastor Laura. She was busy doing something on her phone and she asked me if I ever did the Wordle game which she was doing at the time. I told her that I heard about it but didn't really know how it works. She did her best to explain it to me and helped me get the Wordle game that she uses to come as a daily email. You only get one word each day and you get 6 chances to get this one word. I have come to enjoy doing this beginning of the day mental challenge by finding the one 5 letter word of the day.

Yesterday was a big win for me. I got the word in two attempts, and I only had one letter correct after the first try. I have never gotten the word on the first attempt. In fact, I think I have failed 13 times now in getting the word at all. While I enjoy this morning ritual, I have decided that if someday I get the word on the first attempt, I am going to quit doing these Wordle puzzles. So, I often start with the same word hoping that I will

eventually guess it right. This morning at 5:02, I changed my plan of using the same word. I thought I would outsmart the Wordle game, knowing that it is Christmas and that there is only one 5 letter word that matters on this day. So, I entered J E S U S. And low and behold. I was wrong again, and I'll be playing the game again tomorrow. In fact, it took 5 attempts today before coming up with the word they thought was more important than JESUS today.

But Jesus is not hidden from us, like a riddle or puzzle. Jesus is revealed to us on Christmas Day, and He is revealed to us every day after through his word and through the sacraments of Holy baptism and the Lord's supper.

These 14 verses from John are his version of the Christmas story. John does not mention any angels, shepherds, mangers, cattle, stars, wisemen, inns, Mary, Joseph, donkeys, or even a baby. John declares the birth of Jesus by announcing that Word has become flesh and dwells among us.

This is not what the world was expecting. Therefore, John says the world did not know him. They expected the Savior to come and remove all types of suffering from us, not to become flesh and enter suffering. Jesus the Word of God did not **create** flesh. Jesus the Word of God **became** flesh and dwells among us.

We will confess our faith today using the Nicene Creed. You can hear some of this Christmas story from John as we confess our faith using these words. We will confess that Jesus became incarnate from the virgin Mary. The word incarnate means that Jesus became flesh. Jesus left his throne from heaven and was born from the virgin Mary. But Jesus was also conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was true man, born of a woman and true God conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus came down from heaven for one reason and that is to save you. As a true man, he suffered, died, but rose again and sits at the right hand of his father as God himself. Although Jesus has ascended back into heaven, he has not left us alone. He is still dwelling with us with his word and in his spirit.

The author of Hebrews reminds us that in ancient times, God spoke to us in many and various ways through the prophets who predicted that a Savior would be born. On Christmas Day, these many and various ways that prophets spoke about Jesus have come to an end. On Christmas, God speaks to us through his Son and his name is Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the Word for the beginning of your day until you rest in his care at night. Jesus, the word of God speaks to you today, declaring "There is no more time of waiting. I have arrived. I forgive your sins. Eternal life is yours." Amen.