



**“PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE STRAIGHT IN THE
DESERT A HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD.”** **ISAIAH 40:3**

Dear Friends,

“In the day of Herod the king...during the reign of Caesar Augustus.” How much do we know about Herod or Caesar Augustus? Herod was a puppet king for Rome, a terrifying figure, huge on ego and short on temper, whose iron grip on the people was maintained by bribery and even murder. Caesar Augustus was simply Caesar. He ruled like a god and expected people to treat him like one. “In the days of Herod the King...” Why are these words in Luke’s gospel? Some would suggest that the names are included to set the historical background. But Luke is telling us so much more. This was no “Norman Rockwell” Christmas. This was not about “jingle bells” or the “ho, ho moment.” This was the worst of times.

Recall how Charles Dickens began his classic novel, A Tale of Two Cities? *“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”* Luke was reminding us that light can only be fully received after we have recognized the reality of darkness. In the midst of the worst of times, God invades the darkness with the birth of the holy child. Whatever oppression, whatever burden, whatever sorrow or pain that may afflict our hearts, the Savior is born. As Madeleine L’Engle put it so well:

*That was no time for a child to be born,
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome
Honor and truth were trampled by scorn
Yet here did the Savior make his home
When is the time for love to be born?
The inn is full on the planet earth,
And by greed and pride, the sky is torn –
Yet love still takes the risk of birth.*

Then the Lord showed the people a more excellent way. God became one of us in Jesus, so marvelously, that you and I can celebrate his presence, where the angels’ song is heard and the “hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” The transcendent God is imminent. The imminent God is transcendent. “Therefore with angels and archangels, we laud and magnify his holy name.”

May the Holy Child be born again into our hearts and may God bless you all with a new sense of beauty, hope and love as we celebrate the birth of the Prince of peace.

Faithfully,

The Rev. John S. Rogers
Interim Rector

ADVENT IV — DECEMBER 21ST: 8AM SPOKEN EUCHARIST; 10:15AM LESSONS & CAROLS (COMBINED SERVICE)
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: 4PM CHILDREN’S PAGEANT WITH EUCHARIST; 10:30PM FESTIVAL WITH EUCHARIST