

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of January 4, 2021

“God With Us”

Written by Mary Anderson

Monday, January 4th

God’s Grace In the Flesh

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, ‘This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’). From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” John 1:14-16. The central claim of John’s gospel is that the word that was in the beginning, was with God, and was in God, became human. God chose to take on human form. We are not saved on our own but we receive “grace upon grace” because of Jesus. The word grace never appears again in John’s gospel but he shows this grace throughout the life and works of Jesus. How wonderful it is that God brought/sent his Son to live among us so we may receive his grace. All our sins are forgiven because of God’s grace, over and over again. I can’t think of a better Christmas gift this year especially, but also in the Christmases to come. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Prayer: Love divine, your grace endures from generation to generation. You love us abundantly, yet we struggle to love ourselves and our neighbors. Equip us to give and receive compassion for ourselves and our neighbors. Amen

Tuesday, January 5th

Chosen to Be Holy and Blameless

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before

the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love...In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people to the praise of his glory.” Ephesians 1:3-4,13-14. We are chosen by God to be his children. In our baptism we Christians are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit to do God’s will in the world. Paul (or possibly one of his followers)’s letter to the Christians at Ephesus where he had spent time preaching and teaching acknowledges them as blessed by God as they have chosen to follow Jesus’ teachings. He thanks them too in later verses for all they are doing in God’s name. We, too, are to share Jesus’ love with all. We need to share all he has given us as we are able. We are his children, marked with the cross of Christ. We know God is with us in all we do and say, even in our current “quarantine”. Let us be grateful that we are his chosen children and invite others to come to know him too. Prayer: Let us speak anew your wisdom, eternal Lord. Open the leaders of every nation to the vision of your justice. Empower peacemakers. Protect health care providers and military personnel called to assist and bring with haste the end of this pandemic and all wars and let peace reign. Amen

Baptism of Our Lord

Written by Ashleigh Henning

January 6th, 2021

On Epiphany, Christ’s birth is revealed to the nations. Christmas can seem to be an over-

whelming time for many. The chaos of traveling, or finding the perfect gift, or making an extravagant meal can dim the light on the peace and joy that is the holiday season. In the time that follows Christmas and the New Year, we almost enter a time of restoration as well as new beginnings. We have caught our breath from the craziness and stress of holidays, and entered into a whole new year. Psalm 72 reminds us of the purpose and intentions of the birth of Jesus. Just a short 12 days prior, the Son of God was born, he is revealed, "May he rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the Earth... For he will deliver the needy who cry out... He will rescue them from oppression and violence for precious is their blood in his sight." May this Epiphany be a reminder that Christ was not only born, but he calls you into a Kingdom of love and belonging as you are. Prayer: May You guide us in this new year in the spirit of love and belonging, so that we can proclaim the good news of Your kingdom. Give us strength and courage to walk beside You as we continue to walk deeper into Your name. Amen

January 7th, 2021

How crazy is it that the Savior of all people was born a humble baby, probably only about 7.5 pounds. Yet within this child is the strength to defeat all sin and death that is in the world. The story of Jesus from an infant into the person who carried the cross on Good Friday is one so powerful it leaves many of us in awe. Psalm 29 reminds us of the unmatched power that the Trinity has, the same power that created the Earth, died on the cross, and flows within us all today. "The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord over mighty

waters." And to our Earth, a King, full of majesty and power, was born. How wonderful that despite all of our mistakes and faults, this same King chooses to speak to us! Prayer: Remind us of your strength as I walk beside you. When I am weak and low, may I hear Your majestic voice calling and guiding me forward. Guide me into Your light, open my heart to Your Spirit. Amen.

January 8th, 2021

Close your eyes and imagine that we are all back in the church together, look around at all of the members (of course in your vision we are all safe from Covid-19), and consider how we are all so different and unique. Sit in this vision for a couple of seconds, and when you return we can explore it a little more. It is incredible how different we all are, yet we all love and adore the same God! This God has blessed us all individually with a soul fully equipped to spread the story of God and their love for us all. It is encouraged to us all to, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you," (1 Timothy 4:11-16), for God created you in an image of love, joy, and light, in the image of God! Prayer: God, continue to reveal to us the ways in which you have equipped us to be fully able to share the story of Your love in the nations. In these revelations, create boldness within us so that we might share the truth of the gospel in everyday that we live with you. Amen

January 9th, 2021

We are nothing without our conviction in Christ. However, the starting point can be quite ambiguous at times, especially living in a world that is so strong in having a plan for everything. However, the knowledge behind our conviction in God is most simply that we, as fully known and dearly loved people, are

called to love God and our neighbor. Our calling is simply the start, ending, and middle point of our existence, to love. It can be frustrating that the bible does not lay out the exact ways that we can all do this (there isn't a 7 o'clock zoom love session that we can all check off our list and move on.) However, this was the divine intention of God, to love with no limitations, requirements, or agenda. The way that we do this is to, "Be strong, be courageous, and keep the charge of the Lord your God." (1 Kings 2:3) which might be easier said than done, but nevertheless is the most clear and unanimous calling we all possess. We are all characters in the greatest story of all time, one of the greatest loves to ever exist. The love of God for all of the people of Earth. Prayer: Please remind us O'God that we live for You and the power of Your name. Continue to give us the strength and courage to walk in love and discipleship with you, to love with no limitations. Your name is power as we walk through our creation in what is most clearly the greatest love story of all time. Amen

January 10th, 2021

The Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three ingredients to make some of the most unfailing love that has ever existed. The nature of the Trinity is one that is so intertwined and rooted in love and acceptance, and it is so powerful that it lives within us all. When God sent Jesus to the Earth, the game changed. God brought Christ into a human, a human who would continue to change the game. John the Baptist reveals how everything is soon going to change, "I have baptized you with water but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 3:11) Jesus is going to bring alongside him the third piece

to the divine puzzle, and from this point on, nothing will ever be the same. The Spirit brings such power that it can transform lives entirely, hence why it was so special for our church to include that very saying into the end of every worship service in our final commission. Prayer: Holy Trinity, may we live and thrive under your spirit and guidance throughout the Earth. Remind us of our Baptism, where the flesh was immersed in the Holy Water and transformed by the power of Your Grace. As we journey in your kingdom, remind us of your light and goodness. Amen