***Christmas Day – 2017***

***John 1:1-14***

***Rev David R Froemming***

* Jesus Christ—the Word of God made flesh is the gift that keeps giving to us new birth, new life—in a common identity for us all. Our common identity in Jesus Christ is God’s gift of peace on earth to us.
* The Gospel of John brings forward the Word that speaks creation into being in Genesis Chapter 1, “and God said let there be light”—this light is Jesus Christ.
* The story of the Word that creates in Genesis Chapter 1 is important as it represents the revelation of the true God who creates order without violence. All other stories of creation from antiquity are about violent battle creating the world. The Word is peaceful creation. The Word has now come as Jesus—who is God’s peace among us.
* The Gospel of John tells us that now because of Jesus coming to us—we now can be “born of God.” We are no longer left to our claims of birth identity in family or any other earthly group. As we see in a divided world—all these earthly identities leave us in division and conflict with no common source to reconcile us and bring us peace.
* We are “born of God”—takes us back to the claim of Genesis 1:25 where it is stated that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. Jesus has come to restore us all into the image of God’s likeness—a likeness built upon peaceful creating.
* This is the gift that Jesus—God’s Word comes to give us—the revelation that beneath all human divisions that we are One—all from the same Creator. His birth confirms this for us.
* The Word made flesh—Jesus Christ has brought us the gift of the Gospel—the “good news” that we are called to give to the world—a world in need of *peace.*
* Jesus is light in the darkness—the darkness of human division—of whatever we use to label people and make them into irreconcilable opposites. Jesus—God’s Word—is here to overcome the darkness of human division.
* The way in which Jesus comes to be our light is through being “born of God”—as the hymn *Hark the Harold Angels Sing* always reminds us “born to bring us second birth.”
* This “second birth” is the life we know in our baptism. This “second birth’ is the life given at our Lord’s table. This “second birth” is the life we have to offer the world as a way out of the narrowly defined identities in our humanity that leave us divided. This “second birth” is the path of the Word that creates peacefully.
* Jesus has come as light into our world to transform us into sons and daughters of God. We now receive the gift of new life as grace and truth. Life that is grace is gift—not ours to grasp, exploit, and market, but to give freely to others—as the Gospel. It is truth—the truth of the Creator Word Jesus Christ—who reveals that *all people are created in God’s likeness.*
* Christmas is the gift that keeps on giving. The Word made flesh in Jesus Christ comes to be born in all people—through the Gospel of grace and truth—the gift of a common identity in a divided world—the gift of peace. This is the present we receive today. This is the gift that we receive in order to give away all year long—the Word made flesh—Jesus Christ—God’s peace to us. Amen.