

St. Columba's Episcopal Church
December 19, 2021 – 4 Advent
Love
The Rev. Dr. Susan Kraus

Love, the final theme of Advent, is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.

Love is about the past. For the followers of Jesus, especially his birth so long ago. Love which entered human life then in a new way, God incarnate in Jesus. Love joining the human journey of life intimately, completely, mercifully.

Love is about the present. If we trust the teaching of Jesus, which is a summary of the teaching given in the Hebrew Bible: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself," if we trust this teaching, we will do our best to grow in love now. We will live a life of "love in action," showing mercy to God's other children in thanksgiving for our life and blessings and to show our love for God.

Love is about the future. We hope for the coming of God's kingdom, which is a kingdom of love and justice and life. Because of this hope we live now in ways that promote love and justice and life. That is how we live while we wait for God's coming. We wait, knowing that Christ will be our judge, a judge of mercy and compassion who cares about how we show mercy and compassion to others.

In this season we naturally think of the people we love. Some have gone home to God; many are with us still. The people who walk with us on the journey of life, whose love we receive, who receive our love. Our hearts may feel full to overflowing as we think of all the love we have already shared, that we are sharing now. And none of us knows the human love we have yet to experience, the children of God who will walk with us in the days ahead.

But great as our experience of human love has been and is and will be, it is all but a foretaste, an inkling of the Love we will know. Love – our hope, our faith, our joy. Love – the beginning. Love – the end which will have no end.

On this last Sunday of Advent on the theme of love, let me share with you the words of a Christmas poem by Christina Rossetti, "Love Came Down at Christmas."

"Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas: star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead, love incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign."

In the holy name of Jesus, LoveIncarnate. Amen.