

St. Columba's Episcopal Church
January 7, 2024 – A Service of Epiphany Lessons and Carols
John 1:1-14
The Rev. Dr. Susan Kraus

We have just heard the opening passage of John's Gospel, the passage known as the "Prologue." A prologue gives us an introduction to what is coming. In this case, an introduction to the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This prologue starts "in the beginning" of all creation. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Who was this Word? "The Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God."

Jesus Christ was and is God. During the season of Christmas, we celebrate the incarnation of God in Christ, the astounding fact that out of God's infinite love for us – in the words of the Nicene Creed – "for us and for our salvation [God's Son] came down from heaven ... and was made man." A baby was born in Bethlehem – Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus Christ – both divine and human.

At Epiphany we celebrate the many ways in which God has manifested God's presence to us, how God has been made known to humanity. John's Gospel and the other Gospels tell us a great deal about Jesus and about how God is revealed in Jesus. The Prologue gives us hints – look for creation and for life; look for light that shines in the darkness without being overcome, light that shines on and for everyone; look for grace; and look for truth.

The Prologue reminds us that Christ invites people to accept him and by accepting him, to become children of God. This isn't a simple matter of words, of saying that we believe in Jesus. As John describes it, it is a matter of receiving Christ – that is, taking Christ into ourselves – and believing in Christ – trusting him with our lives. We are not invited to become God, as Christ is, but we are invited to become children of God. Children who – like Jesus – have come from God and are going to God. Children whose lives reveal the nature of their heavenly Father, lives which reflect the life and light, the grace and truth of God.

The Prologue to John's Gospel invites us to understand our lives as being more than just temporal. We are invited to look beyond the world's understanding of life and to consider eternal life in God. We are invited to see the "big picture," from the beginning to the end, from alpha to omega.

As we go forward in the church year, we will be learning more and more about how God is revealed in Jesus. I think we are also invited, in the time before us, to consider how our lives – as individuals and a church – reveal the Lord we love. Let's not forget that we are called to be life and light, grace and truth in our small spheres of life, in the time given us and in the ways made straight before us – all to the everlasting glory of God. Amen.