

Pastor Jane Gingrich,  
Spiritual Health Practitioner  
with Royal Inland Hospital, Kamloops, BC  
Sermon written for Sermons by Email  
January 4, 2026  
Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
**John 1: [1-9]10-18**

## **John 1:1 [2-9] 10-18**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]*

*10He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14And 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.*

*15(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.'") 16From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.*

*(NRSV)*

This is the week when we are preparing not just for *God-in-the-world*, but for *God-with-us* – Epiphany and the Baptism of Jesus.

These are transitions in the season of our church communities that point to Christ's presence here among us now.

Already Christmas has been full of festive celebrating- with special music and special gatherings.

Today we sing Christmas Carols and interpret the Word of God among us, two thousand years after the birth story that we've been reading together. Back then it was all still relatively unremarkable, as baby Jesus was still an infant; but now, when we look back, we can interpret so much more in what was happening and what this means for us today.

Shepherds and angels; wise ones and visions.

We read in the Gospel of John:

*"<sup>10</sup>He was in the world... ..yet the world did not know him."* (John 1:10)

So often in life we make sense of events, relationships and experiences best in hindsight.

For example-

The extra effort around holidays that parents put in that we only understand as adults when we can see how much time, preparation and thought it all requires.

-or-

The gift from a friend that is so kindly offered- then we find out later that in addition to their care, they were weighed down by so much in their own life at the time and their effort means all the more.

-or-

Holding in prayer people and places that come to mind- and we might not ever fully know why those prayers were needed, but trust that what is needed is given by God.

[pause]

It reminds me of a story from a while back-

About twenty years ago on an exchange in West Africa, I found myself feeling very alone. In the first four days I had filled half the pages in my new journal and cried myself to sleep each night. I was afraid of the food, the water, the bugs... everything!

On the evening of that fourth day I walked out onto the cement veranda of my host family's home to sit and write. My host mother was sitting on a stool, sewing there and knew something was up. She spoke up and asked me what was wrong. With tears brimming my eyes I told her I hadn't known how much I would miss home; that it felt like I was really far away from my family- I said that I knew I'd be okay and everything, it was just hard right now.

She got up, came over, put her arm around me and said, "While you are here Jane, you are my girl and I'm your Maman, this is your family."

[pause]

There was Christ.

[pause]

It is so much easier to look back, reflect, and see God at work.

In the moment, it is much more difficult to notice.

I admit that I have a hard time looking around right now at the global crises and pain of the world and finding God's presence.

Maybe you do too.

I am struck by two statements when I think of all the horror of the world right now.

One was shared with me by a dear friend whose home had just burned down the week before,

she re-interpreted a line from a book and quoted to me,

“A tragedy is not *just* a tragedy”

[*repeat*] I’ll say that again: “A tragedy is not *just* a tragedy”

[*pause*]

The other line is one from Walter Brueggemann, theologian and pastor who died in his nineties this last year, and he said,

[*speak slowly*]

“Pain

brought to speech

turns to energy.”

[*repeat*]

“Pain

brought to speech

turns to energy.”

[*pause*]

This week, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' baptism and reflect on our own baptisms, we hear this reflection from the Gospel of John:

*“<sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>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 1:12-14)

This Bible gospel writer isn't someone who was standing at the manger and aware of the meaning in Jesus' birth. Some 80 or more years later, these words were written, reflecting on who Christ is and what it meant to be Christian.

This interpretation for us of who God is and whose we are as followers begins in birth and baptism.

We come to know God throughout our lives- in the celebrations and life transitions; in hope and joy;

but also in pain brought to speech; in gatherings that name God with us; in global events where a tragedy is not just a tragedy.

We know who God is and can reflect on the presence of God among us, because Jesus, the Word made flesh lived to make God known-

And Jesus, the Word made flesh, ***lives on*** in you.

May it be so.