

The Rev. Kimberly Reinholz
 Grace and Holy Trinity Church
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They wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger because there was no room for him in the inn.

When God became human and walked amongst us on Earth there was no room for him in the inn.

How ironic that the same God who made space, who made time, who made all of creation, in a crowded city full of people gathered to be counted, didn't seem to count and slept outside in the cold dark night.

There is something so completely wrong and yet so completely right about that image.

I pondered the words of this familiar story in my heart this past month and started to think of it a little bit differently. I would like to take you on a journey with me out of the night into the light.

Please humor me for a moment- it's not the late service so I think this is safe.

Can you close your eyes? It is okay, I promise. It won't be for long.

Close your eyes. And while you hear these words and let them enfold your body:

Pause pause pause

In the beginning
 when God created the heavens and the earth,
 the earth was a formless void
 and darkness covered the face of the deep,
 while a wind from God swept
 over the face of the waters.

Then God said, 'Let there be light';
 and there was light.

Open your eyes now and consider all that you see before you God has made. Each person, each structure, each piece of art, each atom and subatomic particle, each and every thing that you and see and and even what you cannot see God created.

Yet, in a world which God created, when God's ownself arrived, there was no room for them in the inn.

God finds a way to make space where there is none.

God finds a way to change the world, one breath at a time.

A breath came at creation when a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

A second came at birth, when Jesus cried.

A third came at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples.

With each of these moments in time, the space-maker reminds us to leave room, and if we do not leave room, then God will find a space to fill a void, a manger, a heart, all of these are vessels for the Holy.

There was no room for them at the inn.

How are we making sure that there is room in our lives for God to show up?

Here at Grace and Holy Trinity where are we making room?

Here there is plenty of space for those of us gathered to greet the newborn king.

It's hard to see who and what isn't here, but there is room for everyone to find a place.

One Christmas Eve at a service like this one about 30 some odd years ago I found my place for the first time. My parents, my sister, (I believe there was only

one at the time) and I were visiting a church with family friends. The preacher invited the children forward for a children's sermon and when he was done he sent everyone back to their parents but I stayed behind.

This man who I never met before, who didn't know me from Eve, took my presence at the altar in stride and even pulled up a chair so that I could see better. This was the first time that I celebrated at the table.

I thank him for making space. Although I have no idea who he was. That little bit of information has been lost to history.

Honestly, I don't remember that moment I was maybe 4 years old but it part of my family lore, but I believe it to be true and I think it is a beautiful way to help us reconsider what it means to make space for God in our midst.

God finds a way to make space every day. Just last week I stood in the parish hall here and shouted across the room to my daughter - are you coming to church mama is starting worship? As the words escaped my mouth I realized that 100 years ago that sentence wouldn't have been uttered here, there wouldn't have been space for me to be here. And I gave thanks because God has created a space for female clergy, just as God creates space for each of us. Through the divine idea of Holy Love, God is able

to transform the world. But we need to recognize when God is using each of us to be instruments of change.

That is what the incarnation of Jesus is all about. The coming of Christ into the world - the arrival of Emmanuel- God with us.

God is with us here tonight. God will be with us tomorrow morning and into the new year. God finds a way to dwell in our hearts and minds and to create spaces for us to imagine new ways of being.

God offers us the invitation to close our eyes and imagine a time when there was nothing but space. Nothing but room. Nothing but inclusion. When all of creation was made new. Like a newborn in a manger. Like a new beginning on a new day.

There is a lot of opportunity for God to make space in this place. Even when we may feel like there is no room for those people. When there is no money for that idea. When there are fewer Episcopalians than there were 50 years ago.

God is making space. God is finding away. God is working here and now.

God found a way to feed 5000 people this year at Red Door Ministry. God found a way to bring you here

tonight. God found a way to share with you the invitation to the table.

And now I want to invite all the little children to join us at the altar for the rest of the service, or for as long as you'd like. Because this is where there will always be space for you.

Beloved. God loves you so much. They made space.

Even when others have told you there's no room in the inn.

Even when others have told you you don't belong.

Even when you have felt like you are a stranger in a strange land.

Even when the darkness seems to overtake you.

Even in those times, God is working and God is making a place for you.

Even then.

God is with us.

Amen