

John 1: 1 – 18
A Good Word for the New Year
1/3/10

Grace, mercy and peace to you this day in the name of the Incarnate
God, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

While listening to today's Gospel text, what words did you hear which spoke to your heart? Which word helps you own, understand, and then want to share this Gospel message? In today's Gospel text there is roughly 312 words to choose from so I am guessing that, if I asked you to use one special word to describe today's message you could come up with one, right? What is your "good word" for this New Year?

We have just finished a season of words. Words sang in sacred hymns and favorite carols; words written in Christmas cards and letters. This has been an exhausting season of words. And now, the holiday has passed into....silence. What "words" are left to hear?

John 1:1-5

The Word Became Flesh

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood^[a] it.

Words - sacred and segway words from the Christmas season to the year which awaits us. Words of clarity, promise and hope. Words which summarize what the babe in the manger means after we put away all the “stuff” we use to define Christmas.

In the words of John, God poured God’s own self into a human form; a form that we will spend the year reflecting upon in Bible Study and during Sunday worship. A year which will also be filled with our own words which will sometimes ask, “What do these words in scripture mean for me?” As

pastor I will also ask what words can be used to illuminate God's light for each of you, a light that will cast away darkness.

We could all use a little more illumination, a little more light, couldn't we? The darkness in our world, our lives, even our church takes many forms. I like to define "darkness as a lack of a Good word or God word, something that results in a "faith spasm". Faith spasms blind us, alter and confuse us and keep us from hearing the Word of God; they generally keep us in the dark. But take heart! We hear in today's Gospel text that this darkness is unable to overcome the light of the Eternal Word. This is a very good word for our first Sunday of the New Year my friends. The Word of God in Christ is a wonderfully hopeful message, nearly too good to be true and nearly impossible to believe when darker words circle around us; when our faith "spasms" into the darkness. But thanks be to God in Jesus Christ the light has come into the world. God put skin on divine attributes namely Jesus, so that the followers who want to know how they should serve have been shown the way.

There is more.....more light, more hope, more good news for you life. If the light of the world, Jesus Christ is truly God and God came to share in

the human experience, God is not far wavy. As he held Jesus “to his heart” so he holds us. God is as close as our next breath bearing us up in our sorrows and rejoicing in our joys. There is no darkness which God in Christ has not, can not, or will not overcome – words that will not fail us today, tomorrow and in the years ahead!

A New Year Prayer

Gracious God,

God of our yesterdays, our today, and our tomorrows. We praise You for Your unequaled greatness. Thank You for the year behind us and for the year ahead. Help us in Your new year, God, to fret less and laugh more. To teach others to love by loving them. Knowing, when Love came to the stable in Bethlehem, He came for us. So that Love could be with us, and we could know You. That we could share Love with others. Help us, God, to hear Your love song in every sunrise, in the chirping of sparrows in our backyards, in the stories of our old folks, and the fantasies of our children. Help us to stop and listen to Your words of love, so that we may know You better and better. We rejoice in the world You loved into being. Thank You for another new year and for new chances every day. We pray for peace, for light, and for hope, that we might spread them to others. Forgive us for falling short this past year. We leave the irreparable past in your hands, and step out into the unknown new year knowing You will go with us. We accept Your gift of a new year and we rejoice in what's ahead, depending on You to help us do exactly what You want. I say it again, we rejoice!

In Jesus name,

Amen.

