

The Rev. Jennifer Adams
Christmas Eve 2008
A Letter from God

One of our traditions at the kids Christmas Eve service here at Grace is that we read out loud God's Christmas letter to us. No kidding, every year a letter comes on Christmas Eve addressed to "The Children of Grace Episcopal Church in Holland, Michigan". And we sit up here and we read it and it's a part of our Christmas celebration.

And so this year I got thinking. Why would God only send a letter to the children? And this bugged me for days and days. And low and behold, God must have heard my wonderings, because when I opened the envelope this year there was a letter for the late service too! Here it is. The older kid, grown up letter from God.

Dear People of Grace,

Merry Christmas!! How about that weather, huh? I am glad that I made snow and ice and rain but I realize that at times it can be a little much. But you made it and I'm glad you're here . . . and before we go too far with all of this celebration, while I have your attention for these few minutes, I want to tell you a little bit about how I, God got to my first Christmas, why this day is so very important, and so very holy.

Now as I begin, I'm going to go back a ways. Just so you know, I do realize that time is relatively short (for you not for me.) I did write little longer letters to other denominations but I take pride in knowing my audience and Episcopalians have a slightly limited attention span when it comes to sermons. Hang in there.

OK, where was I. Oh yeah how I got to my first Christmas. First of all (going way back.) I made you. You being people. I, God, made the earth and the stars and the land and the sky. I made the fish and the birds, the camels and the horses, the pigs, the whales and every living thing. I, God did all of that. Not to mention the trees, the mountains, the sun, and the moon and don't forget, I made you the people. And I, God, loved it all. I can't tell you how much I loved it all. And it was good, all of it -- very, very good . . . (if I do say so myself.) And then I told the people to be good to each other, and I thought I was being pretty clear about that -- I told them to take good care of everything that I had made. And then I let them go on living. And they did.

And here's where I'm going to fast forward (this is where I cut a bit for you guys, but don't worry the essence is still here.) The thing was that the people did some bad things and I, God, got frustrated. Because I loved the people so very much. They weren't being good to each other or taking care of the world or being nice to their neighbors let alone loving them and quite

honestly, it was painful to watch that happen. It was not how I, God, wanted it to go. And so I, God wept.

And then I had to decide what to do. All of you out there who are parents probably know what a difficult decision that was for me. When your children are behaving badly what do you do? Well, just imagine you had a whole earth full of 'em. [Good point.] Well, first I tried organizing them a little more. I gave them commandments, some basic rules to live by – but then they got carried away with that approach and actually used some of the rules to hurt each other or to try to prove that some of them were better than others of them. And so then I tried yelling really loudly. I, God, sent a whole bunch of prophets to shout passionately about justice and peace and I even gave them beautiful images of a new heaven and a new earth and I was sure the whole concept of swords being beaten into ploughshares would get them -- but not everyone would listen. I tried the time-out corner but those who weren't in time out got a little big on themselves. I even considered giving the people back, but they had come from ME so what could I do? And I certainly couldn't have just left all of those people there to fend for themselves because I did love them, I loved them so very, very much.

And so I reminded myself that I was God and that since I was God, I could do miracles. And so I did. And that miracle is what Christmas is all about.

Now I know that over two thousand years later it still sounds a little strange given my almighty options, but the miracle that I decided to do was that I . . . God. . . DECIDED TO BE BORN. I decided that the best way to help you be you the way I wanted you to be you was to become one of you. [Hmmm.] So I sent an angel, Gabriel to tell Mary that she was going to have a son and that he would be holy. And then, through Mary, Holiness – ME – God came into the world on Christmas as the baby you know as Jesus. The Prince of Peace. And the shepherds came to celebrate and the angels hovered all around and they sang beautiful, beautiful songs. And that's how I got to my first Christmas.

Now even once I got to my first Christmas it wasn't all easy. Even for me, God. And there's a whole lot more to this story and I hope you all come back during Holy Week and Easter to hear how far I took this whole thing. But tonight know that I made Christmas happen because in Jesus I did the kinds of things I want all of you guys to do. Like Jesus, I want you to love one another. To share what you have. To see the poor as blessed and to help the peacemakers of the world make the world more peace-filled. I want you to take some risks, for my sake -- to stand up for a truth that is about justice and love. I want you to welcome the stranger and eat with the outcasts and I really wish you'd quit throwing stones. I want you to show compassion and kindness and to care for my creation. I want you to help others heal. (I wouldn't, however, try that walking on water thing – there are a few things I made unique to Jesus.) [Good to know.] I want you to love me and your neighbors and yourselves and that's why I made Christmas happen. That's why I, God, decided to be born.

So, in closing, thank you for celebrating this day. And please, please let this day teach you something about how to be every day. Remember always that I, God am with you and that I love you very, very much. And that's what Christmas is all about.

LOVE,

GOD

Wow. Glad we got a letter too. I think I'll just end with Amen.