

**A Christmas Creation**  
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**Homily for Sardis Baptist Church**  
**12/24/2016**  
**Luke 2:1-20**

Genesis One tells us that God tamed the great chaos monster, and ordered for us a world of beauty and abundance. Our story begins:

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.

Too often, I believe we allow the story of creation to end after the seventh day. God's world complete, and rested from our Sabbath, we skip into a garden. I think that's a mistake. The story of creation isn't finite. It's ongoing. And the story of creation is also the story of Christmas.

Earlier this evening, Tim read John's prologue. The evangelist tells us that the Word, the organizing principle of the Universe has been there from the beginning. And 2,000 years ago this Word, this sweeping wind of God, came to us in the form of Jesus. And a new chapter of creation was written, and is in fact, still being written.

But look closely, and you'll also find the story of creation in Luke's gospel: God creates opportunity. Women and men acknowledge the presence of God in their lives, they respond to God's call, and they share the joy that such a calling brings.

After nine months of stunned silence, Zechariah dedicated his son John and proclaimed: "By God's tender mercy, the dawn is coming, y'all, and it will give light to those who live in darkness."

Elizabeth did not shy away from first-time motherhood, even with an AARP card. She thanked God for her blessings, offered support to her young cousin Mary, and even proclaimed: "Why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord, comes to me!?!"

Young Mary did not flinch. "Here am I, Lord," she proclaimed. Nor did she and Joseph pay any mind to all the gossip about what traditional weddings and traditional families should look like. Instead, they invested their attention into the protection of a special child.

An innkeeper could have turned them away. He didn't. He found room. Groggy shepherds could have just rolled over and ignored the angel chorus. Instead, they chose to rub the sleep from their bleary eyes and investigate the wonderful commotion in the sky. And they were so moved, they went to see the child, and offer him their blessings.

On the day this child was dedicated at Temple, two old servants of the Lord, Anna and Simeon proclaimed: "This is ain't fake news, y'all, this is Messiah. He's real. And he's true. And he's here. Now!"

Luke's is a story of creation. Jesus became the Christ, because he was the recipient of a thousand loving relationships, all responding to the potential God saw in him. And when his ministry began, so too did his acts of creation. Jesus crisscrossed the Galilee offering everyone he encountered opportunities to

experience God in fresh and exciting ways: the breaking of bread; the kindness of strangers; the listening and loving and supporting that come with friendship.

Here at Sardis, we seek to capture Christ's creative spirit. We seek to be an incubator for God's kingdom. When little girls light Advent candles; when grown women sing songs; when grandmothers read sacred texts and offer prayers, we hope that each of these actions ignite the divine spark in all who hear them.

In our silence, God is creating the opportunity for prophecy. In our willingness to serve, God is creating the opportunity to change the world. In our sense of exploration, God is creating an opportunity to see past labels – Charlotte is a city full of mangy shepherds, and unwed mothers, and old women and old men, and innkeepers, and children born into poverty. But somewhere, somewhere, in this city, there is a stable filled with God's servants. And these servants do not dream of changes born on Jones Street, or Wall Street, or other homes of power and principality. These servants dream of changes born out through the creative acts of God.

Sardis Baptist Church, if we are to be the church of creation and the church of Christmas, we must seek the Bethlehem in our own city. And when we find it, we must respond. The Innkeeper had more space. Surely we have room in our hearts for the people of this new creation. The shepherds had the curiosity and initiative to see if the Angels sang a song worth hearing. Surely we have some extra time to explore the possibilities of this new creation.

God said, "Let there be light"; and there was the light. The light is still shining. And the darkness will not overcome it. Sardis Baptist Church, what will you create in the rays of God's light?

Amen.