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Christmas Eve Communion 2009

Space for God

Trying to get your head round God becoming a human being, living within the womb of Mary is something that surpasses our comprehension. One hymn speaks of God contracted to a span. If we consider the God who fills the Universe becoming a human baby that really is quite something. Space for God, - space where God is able to be, but also finding space in our busy lives for God.

- **Finding space in Bethlehem.**

Bethlehem is an interesting place it means House of food, or house of bread. Jesus when he began his preaching spoke of being the Bread of Life. At communion we share in bread which represents the body of Jesus. How fitting that the one who was going to give his life for us, should be born in the place which is able to sustain life.

Recently I spoke with a lady who had lived under the Nazi's during the war. Her comment was that now every day is Christmas Day because there is plenty of food . Likewise a man shared how a relation had been a POW during the war and was made to go on a long route march at times hardly having anything to eat. On one occasion he had a small piece of bread which was a real treat; he took that small piece of bread and shared it with a friend.

Jesus invites you to come and share bread this Christmas but it is the bread which represents the giving of his very own life for each one of us. That's some present it comes to us free of charge but at great cost to Him. He did it out of love for you and I and so that we could experience forgiveness and enter in to a relationship with Him.

Bethlehem was also the home of King David arguably Israel's greatest King. Jesus is described in terms of his ancestry as being of the house of David. We are to understand that Jesus, who was born, was born a King. Yet Jesus was going to surpass King David. Communion is a place for acknowledging Jesus rightful place in our lives. Jesus is not only the one who as the Saviour came to save us but as the one who was raised from the dead is the Risen Lord and that's why we can celebrate his birthday and live our lives in his service.

In the 1C Bethlehem was part of the Roman Empire and it was because of Rome that Joseph and Mary came to be Bethlehem for a census. It's one thing to go to Bethlehem, it's another to find a place to stay.

Of course those who have been to nativity plays or even acted within them will know that there was no room for them to stay The childrens carol goes. [Rat at tat tat, there isn't any room for strangers.](#)

Space for God, well how were the residents of Bethlehem meant to know. At times the Innkeeper gets bad press yet in reality he is to be commended he did find a space for Jesus, not the most salubrious, but nonetheless a place. I suspect Joseph had to charge around, cleaning the place up. Were there any animals? Possibly, which ones we really don't know. But for a lot of residents there was no space to put up Mary and Joseph.

Had they known who was being born then there would have been space, but they looked ordinary. What is so staggering to me is the silent way in which God becomes a human being. No great entrance – but come into this world he did.

What of the people who knew Jesus as an adult, who heard his preaching, what about the people of Nazareth? John tells us he came to his own but they did not recognize him. In effect no room. No vacancy.

John a disciple of Jesus wants us to consider whether we have any space in our lives for God. He writes

¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

Many years ago our young people acted out a sketch. It was all about a Christmas photograph; it was hard to get everyone in. There was some arranging and more arranging, there was shuffling and more shuffling. Eventually the only way to get the picture was to take the picture was to move the baby out of it.

Does Jesus have space in your Christmas – clearly so you are here, But an even bigger question is does Jesus have space in your life. Will you welcome him into your life, into your heart? Maybe your spiritual journey has only just begun, I am so pleased but I would encourage you that like the Wise Men or the Magi you let it continue.

Some of you may be chefs, I hope you've got your trimmings for Christmas
duty, sausages and bacon, great stuffing Brussels, suede, great roast
potatoes and parsnips, some chestnut stuffing, sausage meat. How crazy to
go to so much trouble and yet what a blow to realize you've forgotten the
turkey./

Yet isn't Christmas a strange time, its possible to charge around getting the
right presents for people, get the shopping in, send your cards, prepare a
Christmas Cake and all to celebrate a birthday and then exclude the one
whose birthday it is.

As far as Jesus is concerned as our first song lyrics said welcome, welcome
all are welcome.

Will you come and change in this life changing event. Space for God, God
longs to make his home in your heart, but he does wait to be invited.

Bethlehem – house of Food, House of bread – Jesus I am the bread of life.
 House of David – where is he born King of the Jews. – Phil 2 Every knee shall bow
 The Inn – no room John 1- you choose , but to all who did believe he gave the right to become
 children of God. Christ to be welcomed / received and worshipped.

An Angel Tells about the Birth of Jesus

Luke 1.26-38 One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee ²⁷with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. ²⁸The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. ³⁰Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, ³¹and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. ³³He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end."

³⁴Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. ³⁶Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. ³⁷Nothing is impossible for God!"

³⁸Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." And the angel left her. CEV

Luke 2 The Birth of Jesus

¹About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. ²These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. ⁴So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

⁵Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, ⁶and while they were there, ⁷she

gave birth to her first-born ^[k] son. She dressed him in baby clothes ^[l] and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2.1-7