

Karen Hollis
Christmas Day Sermon
John 1:1-14

A couple of mornings ago I woke to a blood orange sunrise. The sky was crystal clear and the fiery sun had taken over the sky, as it does each morning, in annunciation of the holy. Let there be light; may the light speak truth to all people! It is a new day! God is doing a new thing! And on this particular day; on this special day, with the rising sun, we celebrate that the Son who comes from a place beyond time and space is here and now not only to proclaim, Emmanuel, God with us, but to show us what that means.

Years ago I spent time with a Spanish-speaking congregation, who taught me something wonderful about this morning's text. In their Spanish translation of the Bible, Word is translated Verb, action. So it reads something like this: "In the beginning was the Verb, and the Verb was with God, and the Verb was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (John 1:1-3). God's action was in the beginning – not just God, but God's action – and through it, through him, all things came into being. God's action is not the mysterious part of God, it is the part we can sense, the part with which we can interact. Theologian, Sally McFague, calls it the Body of God. For her, creation is birthed from the womb of God, making Christ necessarily larger than Jesus, as large as creation itself. Gabriola is an easy place to experience it.

Linda St. Clair has a cartoon on her fridge picturing a priest and let's say a Cardinal walking out of a church building with mountains and trees in the background. The text reads something like, "The difficulty we have here in BC, your Grace, is the wide spread belief that this IS heaven." We can hear God speaking through the call of the raven, the call of a neighbor, the crashing waves, and a sunrise. You can sense the holy in them, can't you? I can hear it if I pay attention; you can hear it, too. All of creation shouts for joy in the name of the Creator and the Christ, through whom all things come into being.

Jesus comes from the Creator a complete mystery to us. God incarnate; a child with a mother who loves him, and purpose to shine God's light into the darkest places, the places that have denied God, denied God to others, places that breed sorrow and despair. I imagine Mary holding Jesus, asking, who are you? How will you live into who you were born to be? How will you handle those who hate you? The ones who deny you and aren't ready to face God's truth? Mary holds him tight at the thought, protecting her own heart as much as she is him. Soon she will have to simply trust God's protection, as Jesus' own inner knowing surpasses her ability to shelter him. As he grows into his ministry this year, we are invited again to see God's love in action. We are invited to walk with Jesus and pay attention to what he says, the way he challenges the powerful, draws near to those in need. With creation in us and all around, reminding us of God's majesty, we are invited to believe in him. Believe in his ability to fill you with loving, believe in his ability and desire to heal you, believe in his ability to take down earthly power and transform the world. I think on a level we do believe and we're here because we dedicate our lives to this community and living into God's call. I wonder if there are places in us that haven't seen God's light in a while. Perhaps there is a part of us desperate for God to be closer and more real. What would it be like for those parts to believe? Perhaps it's something to ponder, perhaps it's something to pray about. Luckily we are part of God's body that can hear and respond . . . let us bend our ears to the ocean, hear the raven, let the rising sun echo God's first light . . . and listen for God's truth. Thanks be to God.