

The Rev. Jay Lawlor “Love Came Down at Christmas” Message for 1 Christmas, December 31, 2017 St. John’s Episcopal Church

The Rev. Jay Lawlor was at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Speedway for the First Sunday After Christmas 2017 to conclude his time as guest priest in the parish.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 28, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](http://TheRevJayLawlor.com) preached “Love Came Down at Christmas” on December 31, 2017 as his final [sermon](#) as visiting priest at Saint John’s Episcopal Church in Speedway, IN.



Nativity scene. Image: Creative Commons License.

There are many famous popular Christmas songs and well known Christmas hymns. I’m not going to sing any of them for you, but I invite you to listen the the words from the following hymn:

“Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine; love was born at Christmas: star and angels gave the sign. Worship we the Godhead, love incarnate, love divine; worship we our Jesus, but where with for the sacred sign? Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine, love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign.”

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From the very beginning of Jesus’ life, God sets the example by which compassion becomes Incarnate.”

The Rev. Jay Lawlor

These words are from the hymn “Love came down at Christmas,” by Christina Rossetti. While this hymn is not as well known as others, such as Silent Night, O Little Town of Bethlehem, or Away in a Manager, I find the lyrics to be a

powerful and eloquent reminder of the tremendous miracle of this season.

Just stop and ponder for a moment, God loving the world so much that God chose to come and dwell among us in human flesh: love all lovely, love divine. In Jesus was made manifest the perfect love of God so that the world would know and share in God’s love. This is what the Incarnation is all about: LOVE. Lennon and McCartney were right when they penned “All you need is love.”

Without God’s love for us, there would be no need for Jesus’ birth. It is out of unconditional love for the human condition which God takes on human flesh. Love be yours and love be mine, love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign. Through our baptisms we enter into the miracle of the

Incarnation as witnesses to God's love for the world.

Now, don't get me wrong, I love "Jingle Bells" and Santa Claus as much as the next person – even if Santa is somewhat removed from the original story of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra – a sermon for another time. But Christmas still offers Christians an opportunity to accept the invitation to receive God's love, to experience the miracle of Jesus' birth, and then share the outpouring of God's compassion for God's people and creation. Jesus is the Light of the World.

God being born in Jesus – to free us – is the most perfect act of self-giving love and sacrifice that the world will ever know. It is God's heart so overflowing with love for God's creation that it is love that cannot be contained – even, or especially, in face of a creation that has been trapped in rebellion against God and in conflict with itself. And God chooses to express this outpouring of love in a most peculiar way.

Jesus – God Incarnate – enters the world not in power, wealth and prestige; and without pomp, circumstance and fanfare; but in complete and utter vulnerability, humility and poverty. There is no one more vulnerable than a newborn infant who is birthed homeless, to a peasant couple in a remote town where they are refugees. The best that Mary and Joseph can do is to place Jesus in the animals' feeding trough in the midst the filth and stench of a stable. Jesus' entry into the world was rough . . . even by first-century standards.

From the very beginning of Jesus' life, God sets the example by which compassion becomes Incarnate. God's love is for ALL, no exceptions, and, nonetheless, it is to the lost and the least that Jesus most closely associates – and for whom God's compassion is most clearly revealed. We only need to look to Jesus' humble birth for clear evidence of this.

And who among us, at one time or another, has not been lost or felt least? And who among us has not encountered another soul that is lost or that has been beaten down by the tempests of life? And who among us has not seen, if we allow our gaze to pass their way, those suffering in poverty in a world of plenty? It is in humility that God comes in Jesus and it is to the humble that God first reveals the good news of Jesus' birth. [...]

The full transcript of the Rev. Jay Lawlor's sermon is available at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/love-came-christmas-sermon-rev-jay-lawlor-1-christmas-year-b-dec-31-2017/>

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