

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

28 December 2025

God in and through Us

We have looked at God for us, God Over us and today we look at God through us.

Do you believe WE are the hands and feet of God today?

Text: "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God". 2 Cor. 5:19-20.

There is a Christian song where the person is telling God to do something about how bad the world is today. God's answer is: "I did, I created you."

God came to give and ask.

Give himself in love and ask that those who receive his love spread it among others.

We all love the Spirit of Christmas.

The hope, love, and good will of the season.

We enjoy Santa Claus, Christmas Trees, great family dinners, football games and all the good times we enjoy in and through this season.

We also think of a baby in a manger in a place far away and long ago.

What does a baby in a manger have to do with Santa Claus, Christmas Trees, good family dinners, football games and family fun?

Centuries ago God was localized.

God became flesh and bone, blood and water.

He was localized and visualized in one person, a male child.

In that event of God becoming flesh, we humans begin to see what God is like.

He is like a shepherd who loses a sheep, but rather than forgetting the one and focusing on the ninety-nine he still has, the shepherd values the one enough to go on a long, lonely search.

And when he finds that scared, scrawny sheep, he calls and comforts it.

He is like a woman who does not have many coins, only ten, and when she loses one, she sweeps the entire house until her prize is found.

He is like a father who has two sons, each of whom is lost, one because of arrogance and one because of irresponsibility.

Yet the father deals with each independently, personally, graciously, and lovingly to bring about reconciliation.

God has become localized and visualized, and we can see who he is and what he is.

God showed himself to be, on humanity's side.

He came preaching the year of the Lord's favor.

God also showed himself to be at humanity's side.

God ministers through nearness and warmth, closeness and comfort, touching and holding.

His name is Immanuel, God with us.

He would go through life with us, knowing our concerns and interests, our pains and problems, our trials and tribulations.

Further, he showed himself as God over us, the one who addresses humankind and demands obedience.

He is King.

Yes, it is good news that Jesus came, that God was localized and visualized.

How can God be localized today?

But all of that is history, more than two thousand years of history.
How about now?
Does God become localized and visualized in our time, in our place?
How will the citizens of our community see what God is like?
It will take an incarnation.
That is the way God works.
But How?
Will Jesus of Nazareth have to be born again?
Will another virgin need to be found?
It will take an incarnation, but it will be an incarnation in us, within you and me.
As Christ came to proclaim the Good News, he commissions us to proclaim the message that he lived and died for each human being.
The purpose of that first incarnation in Bethlehem was to facilitate future incarnations in our community and in our church.
God becomes flesh in us.
He is localized and visualized in us.
To some we are the only picture of God they will ever see.
As we provide for the sick and elderly persons, God provided for the sick and the elderly.
As we visit nursing homes and hospitals, God ministers in those places.
As we proclaim the good news of the forgiveness of sins, we do so for God as his representatives.
God is in us, and he does his mission in the world through us.
The redeemed redeem.
Christmas defines where we are, who we are, and what we are.
We are Christ's ambassadors.
Humans are the agents of God's business in the world.
And that is the way one would expect it, since it is the way God does things.
He became a man.
Since humankind could not relate to a God who was distant and abstract, God became human.
Incarnation is the way God works, the way he redeems and reconciles.
He works in flesh through persons, humans telling other humans about redemption, meaning, integrity, life, light, and love.
God lives in us and works through us.
Incarnation calls all persons to reconciliation.
One more word must be heard by all this Christmas season.
Not only does Christ come to save, and not only does he commission all Christians to be his ambassadors or agents, but he also calls all persons to reconciliation.

No more do you have to see God as an adversary, enemy, or foe.
You too can be reconciled..
You can join in this ministry of proclaiming reconciliation to all.
God can be in you, and he can work through you.
As we have journeyed to Christmas this Advent season, we have heard many sounds.
The good news that God is for us, that he is with us, and that he is over us.
And now we have heard another joyful sound, God lives in us and works through us!
God and humans are partners.
Would you ever have dared think that the God you thought was against you is really for you?
That this God is King and summons you?
And that he wants to live in you and work through you?
God in you, depending on you?
That is good news!
That is an offer you can't refuse.
And call yourself his and Christian.

And continue the work of Christ in this hour and location.
We ARE His hands and feet to love, heal, and redeem the world today.