



Wednesday Prayer

Christmas Day – Hope, to Begin Again

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Luke 2:5-7

Today we celebrate the miraculous birth of Jesus, come to be with us in all our joys and sorrows. Jesus' birth – this Good News – was fraught with challenge both then and now. Jesus' birth was a challenge to those in power, a baby come to bring hope to the oppressed and marginalized, to work for peace and justice.

And today, many of us are feeling that hope is hard to find. How do we begin again with wars raging both globally and within our hearts? This Sunday at my church, I found hope in the words of one of our college students home for Christmas and preaching to us in this time. Thank you, Ezra Rahberg, for these words,

“Hope is not always easy. Hope is often not even logical. It is different from optimism in that hope requires action to back it up. Hope is the action of seeing something difficult and saying, ‘I can do this, I can change this.’ God urges us to lean into the divine presence in these trying times. Hope is not a fragile emotion. It is a call to action.”

So in our work together as Cherish All Children, I will hold on to this hope given to us by a baby born to give us second birth, hope given by all the young adults preaching and working towards justice, hope that together our hearts may be softened and our world may begin again. Engaging in this work to protect all God's children is hopeful work. Prevention work is hopeful work. Hope in the ways our connections with young people can impact their lives, supporting them into safety and healthy relationships.

Another element of our worship this Advent season came from *A Sanctified Art*, providing hope in the ways we can begin again and make a difference:

*Let us start small. Let us begin with what is right in front of us.
Let us do the good that is ours to do, and let us do it with joy!*

God of hope and new beginnings, we come to you this day in thanks and praise for your Son, Jesus Christ. We come with all our joys and sorrows, eager to find hope in a challenging world. May we be filled with your presence and begin again, doing the good you have shared through your birth and life among us. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, with special thanks to Ezra and the Sanctified Art Community.