



HOMILY
SCRIPTURE: JOHN 1: 1-14
GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, NC
Saturday, December 24, 2022, Christmas Eve
The Rev. Dr. Marcia W. Mount Shoop, Pastor

The Gospel of John 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through the Word, and without the Word not one thing came into being. What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. The Light was in the world, and the world came into being through the Light; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Christmas Eve 2022. Here we are, Grace Covenant. We made it to another Christmas Eve. Last Christmas we had social distancing in the pews and were just finding our way with hybrid worship services, and most people were still tuning in online.

In 2020 we were all online because of COVID and then a snowstorm hit and we wouldn't have been able to get to the church building even if we had tried.

The year before, 2019, is hard to even remember the pre-COVID world. So much has changed. So much and so many lost. We are all different, things feel different. Some of it's a good kind of different. Some of it's a hard kind of different.

Maybe it's just me, but I am struggling a bit with the Christmas spirit this year—whatever the Christmas spirit is anyway. Once you decolonize Christmas and then COVID it and then mix in some of the hard realities we are facing on this planet, in our country, in our community, and in our own lives—Christmas just feels like a lot right now.

We all have to find our own way through the current moment in history and how it can conspire to steal our joy. Some meditate, some exercise, some pray, some distract themselves with work, some live in denial, some find ways to numb the pain. I mean we all probably do a little bit or a lot of all those things.

But I am wondering if you've tried something lately that is literally at your fingertips. You don't have to make an appointment. They are there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And there are always new ones being born every day! One of the simple pleasures of life on earth in 2022, if you will.

My Christmas gift to you tonight, GCPC, is my own personal top 10 memes of 2022—curated especially for you, GCPC.

Are you ready?

First for #10 I have a three way tie—I mean there are so many good ones out there! It narrows down choices considerably when you disqualify all the ones with cuss words, but man there are still so many!

So the three way tie for tenth place:

#10 Three-Way Tie (Micah put one up at a time) (MMS will read them one at a time)

my dog sighs a lot for somebody who doesn't contribute to this house or know what a government is



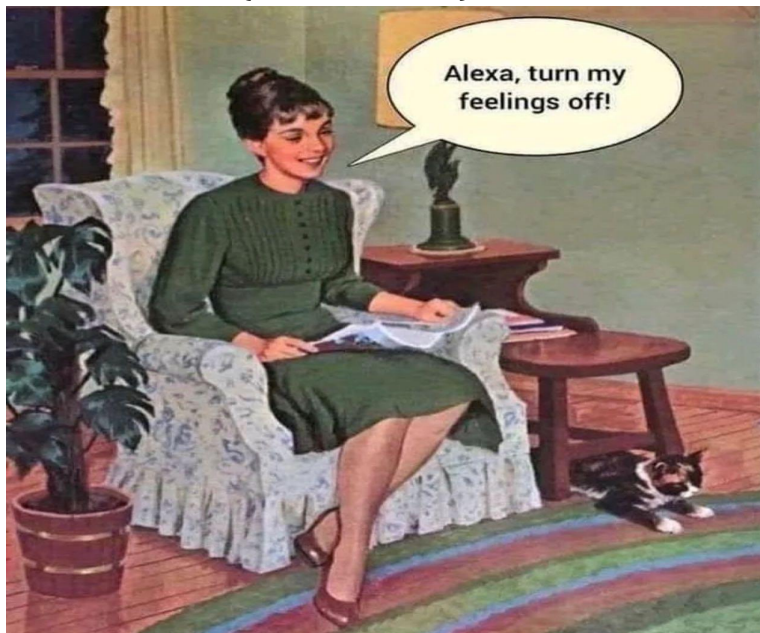
Cydni Beer
@cydbeer

I just witnessed a woman pull out her ringing phone from her purse. She loudly sang along with the ringtone to the very end- Then this woman slipped her phone right back into her bag. She never answered it.
This is the energy I'll take into the rest of the year.

Did you know it takes a plastic bag 20-100 years to break down, yet it takes me approximately 1 minor inconvenience

#9 is one I couldn't pass up—it's tailor made for a white dominant church trying to take a hard look at ourselves and how white supremacy shows up in our church and in ourselves. What white people wish Alexa could do...

#9 Alexa meme (MMS will read)



#8 is the closest we will get to potty humor.

#8 Porta Potty Meme (MMS will read)



Kristen Mulrooney
@missmulrooney

...

Just heard a woman yell “noooo my phone” from inside a porta potty. Wishing her nothing but the best.

Oh and there are so many good Jesus memes out there y’all! But most of them do have inappropriate language for church. And since a lot of them are making fun of Christians, the white Jesus is most often depicted. So, just remember, GCPC, Jesus was not white. But sometimes it's funny to think about all the crazy stuff people think up for the white Jesus to do! This one is a personal favorite. I hope you like it!

#7 Jesus Flip Flop (MMS will read)



#6, well I think #6 speaks for itself for all of us open to deconstructing systems and institutions.

#6 Jury Duty



#5 really speaks to me after my sabbatical. A girl can dream!

#5 Frog and witch



#4 arrived just in time for Christmas this year!

#4 Mom's XMas present



Jaron Myers
@jaronmyers

Asked mom what she wanted for Christmas this year and she said "I don't want any gifts, I just want to know my kids are happy" well that's a pretty big ask, Christy. Can I just get you the vacuum and call it even

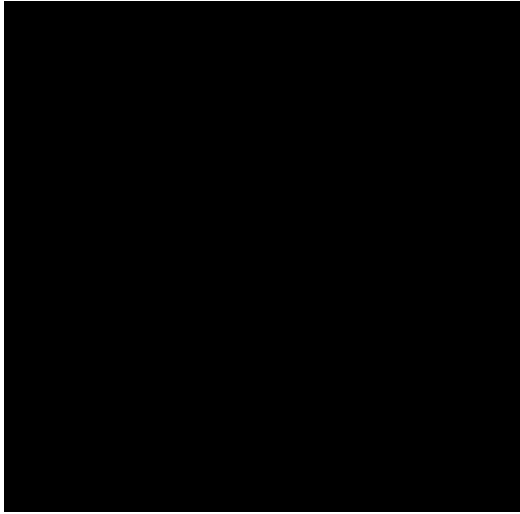
#3 Is for all of praying types, we're all trying to trust God, but sometimes it's hard.

#3: Checking on God



#2 was almost my #1. This is for all of us who love the vibe of working from home.

#2 Working from home (MMS reads)



And the #1 2022 Meme specially curated for you, GCPC, the centerpiece on our Christmas 2022 Mood Board. Make sure you have the sound up, Micah!

#1: Bob Dylan, we are the world video:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmcEJ_Jo1xV/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

It makes sense that we are struggling with joy these days, GCPC. And it makes sense that we've never yearned more deeply for the world to change.

This is a night when we come together still hoping against hope, still hungry for the miracle of God's love, still homesick for true belonging, still searching for a way to believe the unlikely story that God loves us so very much, that God chose to come into the world vulnerable, pushed to the margins by Empire, depending on the kindness of strangers and the trustworthiness of friends.

This is a night when we sing songs of wonder even when our hearts are heavy, and we light candles in the shadows of long winter nights. This is a night when we let our imaginations glimpse into a cosmos that desires the likes of us to feel utterly and completely loved. The Word that was with God, that was God at the dawning of time—a burst of promise and possibility that is willing to traverse light years to be right here, right now.

May this Christmas be sweet for each of you, may it be healing for all of us, may our hearts be warmed by the sounds of sharing life and laughter together (move to table)

... may we find joy at this table of Incarnation, this table that calls us home to the flame of Christ in each of us, and to the promise of a world reborn.

Christmas is Communion, Grace Covenant, and the feast is ready.

Thanks be to God.