

God, the God of all creation, became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

This prologue to John is my favorite passage in the entire Bible because I think it captures what God has been trying to do since the start of all creation...love us.

God's voice spoke into the void and made light, and water, and stars in the sky, and animals on earth. Why? Because he loved.

Throughout the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, we hear the continuation of this love. We hear God's joy in the faithfulness of Abraham. We hear God's sadness as Moses' followers turn to the golden calf. I imagine this is the same joy and sorrow, consolation and desolation that God feels with us throughout our lives alternating faithfulness and wandering.

So God was loving his people throughout the Old Testament, seeking them out when they wandered away, trying to find new ways to express his love. I picture God always faithful, but always frustrated.

And then somehow God decides to do the unthinkable. Though he is in his Word as it is passed down to his people, they seem to need something more. They need this Word, this impressive but distant feeling God close to them, as close as can possibly be.

The Word becomes flesh, God becomes human and dwells among us. This is the greatest act of solidarity possible. God refuses to sit on the sidelines but wants to get right in there, scary as it may be, with his hurting, needing people.

Now I want you to think for a moment about your service expectation for this year. We ask you to do direct service—go right to those in need, to do something out of your comfort zone—to push yourself in reaching out to those whose lives are different from what you have known, and in doing all this to be consistent and build relationship. This is not easy, it's not comfortable. But through it we too get off the sidelines, scary as it may be. We share God's story of love with others by serving in the line at a soup kitchen, walking with the sick and the old, working with kids whose daily reality may be vastly different from our own. And in doing that which is unexpected, which may once have seemed unthinkable we become part of God's creative love and we ourselves are recreated. We hear an echo of God's voice, Let there be light, and as we bear the light of this love we know that it is good.