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Peace, Sun Prairie  
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Christmas Day

**John 1:14**  
**The God Who Became Man**

*Glory to God in the Highest, and peace to  
His people on earth. Amen.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

There have been many men in history who have wanted to “be god.” The Egyptian Pharaohs, Roman Caesars; Chinese, Japanese and Incan Emperors either claimed to be gods or were called gods by their followers. One ancient Syrian king even named himself “God Manifest.”

Many others who never called themselves gods have acted like they wanted to be treated as gods when it came to power, fame or devotion. So the musician John Lennon said about the Beatles: “*We’re more popular than Jesus.*” Or we could think of

Napoleon, Hitler or others carving out empires for their own power and glory.

Yes many people try to be god, but there has ever only been one **God who became man.**

That human beings would try to be “god-like,” should not surprise us who know the Bible. It was part of the first temptation to sin, when Satan with deadly deceit lied: **...when you eat of it... you will be like God.** Adam and Eve did more than eat a piece of fruit. They doubted the true God’s goodness and set themselves up to “be god” for themselves, to choose their way instead of God’s way.

And we, their descendants have been no different. We have a direct spiritual connection to that first sin of elevating self over God, and generally over everyone else too. That natural sinful condition shows itself in the inborn selfishness you can glimpse in even the smallest children.

Put two one year olds in one playpen with just one stuffed animal, and you will get the same selfish “mine!” that still growls in grownup hearts when someone else gets the bigger piece of cake, the

bigger gift, the bigger raise, the greater attention or whatever it is *we* wanted or thought *we* deserved. At the sinful heart of it, is the same ugly self-exaltation so obvious in the ancient kings who would call themselves gods and demand everyone else serve them.

It can even happen when we serve or give to others. “See, now they’ll notice how good and faithful I am, now they’ll love me, now they’ll pay attention to me... oh how deep that sinful streak of worshipping self runs in hearts, even creeping up when we serve in church!

Really, what lies behind every single we commit is us arrogantly saying to God: I know better than you, I’ll be ‘god’ for myself, I’ll take my way over your way. So we too again and again are guilty of trying to “be god,” saying it should all about me rather than honoring the true Maker and Monarch of all.

And it all gets us nowhere. We are no closer to God’s throne s throne than when Adam and Eve’s sin brought misery and death into the world. Our sin

only adds pain and strive into our world and finally earns us the same sentence Satan gets for his rebellion against God: an eternity apart from God's goodness in hell.

So just marvel how totally different and utterly amazing is the One whose birth we celebrate this morning. There is nothing else like this child born in Bethlehem.

He actually *is* God, with all the power, might and authority of God. He is the God the Son, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is the One true God: **The Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He actually *is* God, but He chooses to be man! **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**

Just think of it! Into a world where man is sinfully trying to "be god" for themselves, came **the God who became Man.** There is nothing else like it!

Oh sure there have been plenty of pagan myths and man-made religions that feature a god somehow becoming a man. But none of the devil's counterfeit religions ever come close to the blessed event we

celebrate today. For every pagan story of a god becoming a man it's always for that god's own good-like the Greek god Zeus becoming man or something else to chase after women or a god stepping in to help for some selfish reason.

But Jesus Christ, **the Word became flesh**, the true **God became man**, not to get, but only to give. He came not to help the deserving, but the very people who were by nature his rebellious enemies, you and me. He... **came from the Father, full of grace**—undeserved love.

So He who is God and Lord of all **became man**, not for His good, but for ours! He who is true Light from true Light comes down to a sin broken world filled with darkness and unbelief—that sure can't be pleasant to the Holy One!

Jesus does not come to use His mighty power for his own good, but He humbles himself, not making full use of his power. So He **through** (whom) **all things were made**, He who put the stars in the sky, must be wrapped in swaddling clothes to stay warm. The almighty must be carried and fed. He who the

highest heavens cannot contain is now lies in a manger.

The timeless eternal God who was there **in the beginning...** who made the **beginning...** He now as a birthday.

And clearly Jesus, **God** made man did not enter this world to be doted on or hailed by fans like a rock-star. **Though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.**

It is not kings, generals, the rich or mighty who come to celebrate his birth, but a handful of small town shepherds. Even the angels did not sing their heavenly song *to Him*, but to the shepherds!

The vast majority of his **own** people, the ones who been entrusted with the words of the prophets **did not receive him.** It was not the chief priests who became His disciples, but a few fisherman and a tax collector, and even they all ran away when he was arrested! A crowd of **his own** people even shouted, **“Take him away. Crucify him!**

So why did He do it? Why did **God** the one and only **become man**? Answer: He... **came from the Father, full of grace and truth.** He came to show and shower God's saving grace, His undeserved love upon us. He came to rescue us from all our sin of trying to "be god" for ourselves and the punishment it deserves. He came to give to us the priceless gifts of God we could never earn. He came to save us.

So the eternal **Word** of God, was born to take your place and mine, to be our true brother. Through that amazing miracle of the virgin birth, He is fully God, fully man and yet fully free from that old sinful attitude that wants to push self ahead and push others down. With his perfect life of humble obedience to God's will and ways, He covers over all our arrogant sin of challenging God's ways and doubting His goodness, replacing our rebellion with His perfection. He is **the God who became man** to make His sinless life count as the perfect obedience we have all failed to give to God!

Though He has every right to all the power and glory of God, he lays it aside and lives humbly as a man. He who is God and Lord of all comes not to **be**

**served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom** for us all.

He is the **God who became man** that He could die for us **when we were still sinners**, to pay the full price for our rebellion as he shoulders our sin, our misery, our hell upon the cross.

That means trusting in Him, we truly are forgiven, even for our horrible sins of daring to think we know better than God. When **God became man** to live and die for you, you can be sure no sin is left unforgiven. All has been paid for. All has been covered by His blood.

As Martin Luther, quoting St. Bernard once put it: *Now I know that God is not angry with me; for He is of my flesh and blood... if He were angry with me, He would not have taken upon Himself my flesh and blood.*

Jesus is the **God who became man** to gives us a brand new lease on eternal life: **To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of**



**natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.**

Through the gift of Holy Spirit worked faith, Jesus gives to us the status we could never earn, never choose for ourselves or become of ourselves. He gives us the status of the **children of God** who will share His Father's mansions in eternal life, free from all the pain, sorrow, disappointment and death of this broken world!

Look again into Bethlehem's manger and see that greatest of good news, that love beyond understanding: **The God who became Man** to save sinful mankind, to rescue you, to rescue me. Such a wonder could only come from the heart of the One true God, so **full of grace** that He would give all He has to rescue the same sinful people who rebelled against Him!

Be amazed. Even more importantly believe in and never let go of this greatest of all love: **The Word became flesh, God became Man for you.** Amen.

*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! Amen.*