

April Alford
Sabbatical Pastor
Our Hope MCC
January 3, 2010

In our gospel reading today we are told that darkness has never been able to consume the light. The light is able to shine in the darkness. When I think about this imagery I am reminded of how a night light comforts a child. A child goes to bed and is scared of the dark because they are unable to see. When the nightlight is plugged in it produces enough light to see but the darkness is still in the room. John speaks often of the word the word that was from the beginning and was made flesh. The one who came down from God and was not recognized. Jesus bore humanities truth and lived among us. Jesus taking human form means that Jesus had to deal with the shadows. The shadows that are part of the human condition. It is disheartening to read, hear, or watch some of horrible things happening in the world. Some, of these things are, the economy, unemployment, terrorist plots, murder, and illness. I do believe that in the midst of all our troubles God is with us we don't walk in the shadows alone.

In Sirach we are told that Wisdom never forsakes us and is present always. Wisdom lives with her people. The people who have been given a portion of Wisdom's heritage where she made her resting place. Looking at both passages the Word, the word made flesh and Wisdom have existed together before time. I am drawn in to the poetic language and imagery of Wisdom. Then I began thinking Wisdom sounds great but is it easy to

achieve? I know that most have the learning or Wisdom that I have acquired has been hard gotten. Wisdom has not moved like a mist but more like a rainstorm.

I have had trials and tribulations, I have had pain and sorrow, lost many things and then acquired them again. Please understand I am not saying that Wisdom doesn't come with age but the fact it comes with age can also be frustrating.

I would like to share a part of my story that I am very proud of. When it happened I was ashamed and embarrassed. I am sure we all have some event or story in our lives where we spent time in the shadows. Times that we have never told anyone or shared. Times that we have only shared with a few people. I want you to know my story is personal but not so personal that it is inappropriate to share at Church.

During my time of struggle I believed that I was alone. I believed God was not hearing my cries. I questioned what Jesus stood for and how wisdom moved through my life. It wasn't until years later I realized they had been with me throughout my struggles and pain. Faithfully wisdom provided a new perspective that I believe God had for me to learn.

You and I live in a very dark world. If the light of the gospel of Christ is going to shine in this world, it must shine through us because, as Jesus continues to tell His disciples about their identity, "You are the light of the world". Light is the communication of the Gospel. So there are two sides; on the one hand we live the Gospel on the other hand, we preach it

God's Word is a light that clarifies the darkness we affect society's thinking and living by the power of our lives. On the other hand, we turn on the light so that everyone can see.

During the Christmas season the LGBT community and its allies celebrate God's eternal Wisdom who makes her home in the particularity of mortals. We testify to God's Word, who lived the divine love despite violent resistance. We affirm our identity as Wisdom's beloved children, who participate in God's saving work to bring all things together.

Let us remember, He that was "with God," and "was God," is also "Emmanuel, God with us. Amen