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Encounter Christ...Grow in faith...Love as Christ loved...Tell the Story

The Cosmos, the Cosmic Christ, and Quantum Entanglement: Faith, Hope, and Love in the 21st Century

I've lived my whole life in a landlocked state on the plains. The only places I've lived other than Nebraska are Kansas and southern Minnesota – not exactly different. I'm a bona fide flatlander and never saw the ocean until I was maybe 9 or 10.

To be honest, I find both mountains and the ocean a little scary. They're just so big. Of course there are legitimate reasons to have a healthy respect for both. The mountains have grizzly bears, mountain lions and high places you can fall from, sometimes into rushing water.

And the ocean has riptides and undertows and big waves...and of course sharks.

But some of what I feel standing before the mountains or the ocean is not so much that kind of fear, but just a sense of their power and vastness. It's a recognition of just how small and powerless we humans can be in the face of nature.

That's what I think of when I hear the phrase "fear of God." It's more of a sense of awe and smallness in the face of God.

The natural world often has an ability to make us feel the awe inspiring presence of God. When we look on the mountains, or the ocean, or the plains...when we stare into the vastness of space...when we peer into the microscopic world of cells...or the sub-microscopic world of atoms...and even deeper into the subatomic world of electrons, quarks and photons...we can't help but see God.

They are all God's creation...God's very breath, or spirit, inhabits the universe, from the tiniest quark to the largest star, from the ameba to the blue whale. The natural world is how God was first revealed to us.

Yet somehow, we have lived for centuries in a world that all too often believes that the discoveries of science are incompatible with a faith in the God of the Bible.

The more scientists learn about the weirdness of relativity in the vastness of the universe, and the paradoxes of the quantum world, the closer we seem to get to seeing God in the midst of it all.

Advent is a time of waiting. We wait for the celebration of God's incarnation as Jesus. And we are waiting for Christ to return and for the fulfillment of the new creation.

But we are also waiting for God's continued revelation – how will God be revealed in new discoveries of science? How will God be revealed in the workings of history? How will God be revealed in our own lives in our families and communities?

This Advent, my challenge for you is to intentionally pay attention to God’s revelation in the natural world. The sermons will reflect on the themes of faith, hope and love specifically as God’s revelation through things we have learned about the natural world. But you don’t have to have a degree in particle physics to appreciate the awe-inspiring presence of God in the natural world.

As we go through this season of Advent, look for those things in the natural world that inspire you, that capture your imagination, that take your breath away. This kind of attentiveness is a contemplative practice...a practice of mindfulness. Take the Advent Challenge described after this article. Where will God be revealed to you in the natural world?

Christ’s peace,

Pastor Kris

Advent Photo Challenge

During this Advent season, set aside some time to intentionally pay attention to the natural world. Go for a walk, go out on your porch at night and look at the stars, look out your window on a snowy day, go to the zoo or an observatory. And take pictures. Share your pictures on your own social media page...share them on the church Facebook page...or just send them to me or give me an old-fashioned print. When you post, use the hashtag #bzfaithhopelove.

Advent and Christmas Giving

If you’re looking for ways to give during the Advent season, check out all the different options on Giving Tuesday—December 3. Giving Tuesday follows on the heels of Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. It’s a small way to recognize that there are lots of ways to give and to break out of the commercialization of the Christmas season, even if just a little bit.

Also consider alternative giving for some of your Christmas gifts. My favorite, especially for kids, have been the ELCA’s Good Gifts. Or you can explore fair trade options or cooperatives that offer fairly traded items. Ten Thousand Villages is one such place.

Giving is one of the most fun aspects of the season. Enjoy shopping and picking out that perfect gift for those you love. But in the midst of it all, see if you can find ways to give that help those who struggle.

December Calendar

December 1	9:00 am—Worship with Holy Communion—First Sunday in Advent 9:45 am—Sunday School
December 8	9:00 am—Worship
December 15	9:00 am—Worship 9:45—Sunday school
December 22	9:00 am—Sunday School Christmas program Treats and celebration in Fellowship Hall following program
December 24	7:00 pm—Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols
December 29	9:00 am—Worship with carol sing, scripture and prayers

Party!

You are invited to celebrate Pastor Kris’s 60th birthday on December 28 at an open house at our home, 10011 N. 152nd St in Waverly from 5 pm—10 pm.

No gifts, but if you would like to bring a cash contribution for Lutheran Family Services that would be awesome! Mostly just come celebrate this milestone birthday with us.