

December 21, 2025
Advent IV, Year A
The Rev. Jack Alvey

Where is God?

I once asked my son John, “Where is God?” After a thoughtful pause, he said, “God is in the dark.” He said it like it was the most obvious answer there ever was. Of course, God is in the dark. This is actually good news, especially during the darkest days of the year. During the season of Advent, these days leading up to Christmas, we look and hope and wait for God to show up in the darkness.

On the first Sunday of Advent, Jesus tells us to expect God at an unexpected hour. Other Advent 1 texts invite us to look for God in the cosmos. On the second Sunday in Advent, John the Baptist tells us that God will show up in the wilderness. Last Sunday, that same John the Baptist starts to wonder if God will show up at all. Today, an angel tells Joseph that God is about to be conceived and borne by his fiancé Mary.

Notice the progression. On the first Sunday, we are invited to look for God somewhere out there in the big and often dark world—in the cosmos. On the second Sunday, we learn God is poised to show up in the barren and lightless wilderness to a bunch of misfits through the waters of baptism. On the third Sunday, we learn that God is in the darkness of our doubt and despair.

And now today, we learn God is poised to show up in the flesh of a human being whose people have lived in great darkness. God’s proximity to us goes from cosmic to communal to personal. God is with us on a cosmic level. God is with us on a communal level. God is with us even when we don’t believe God is with us. God even lives inside of us.

In other words, God is everywhere. There is nowhere under the earth or upon the earth or above the earth where God can’t go. Therefore, there is nowhere you can go where you are outside of God’s saving embrace. And this is the good news of Advent and Christmas—God is with us—Emmanuel.

Now, after watching this pageant, you may have noticed that things didn’t go exactly according to plan. Perhaps a line was forgotten, a costume slipped, or a prop went astray. And that’s okay—because no matter what happens, Christmas still happens.

Some of you may have seen the movie *Christmas Vacation*. Each story follows a similar storyline. Plans are made. Plans go awry. And yet... Christmas still happened.

Ours is a God who means to find us in the dark because, if we are honest, we spend much of our life dwelling in the darkness—the darkness of doubt and fear, the darkness of despair and hopelessness, the darkness of a chaotic and unpredictable world.

Today we are also blessed to witness a baptism—a beautiful sign of God showing up in our midst, in the waters, in the life of this child, and in our own lives as we are reminded of God's faithful presence.

The good news that Advent points to is a God who isn't afraid of the dark. My prayer for you and your families this year is that God finds you in whatever darkness you happen to find yourself in. I pray that God's light shines upon you and scatters the darkness from before your path. Even in your darkest hour, when you are most afraid, I pray that you know in all your being—your heart, body, and mind—that God is with you always and will never leave you.

Amen.