

The Reverend Marjo Anderson

M-Christmas Eve

24 December 2018

Thematic

Salem, Bridgeport

“So Big, So Small, So Far, So Near”

In the beginning, that force that we name “God” spoke,
and out of God’s mouth an explosion of light and heat like a thousand nuclear blasts
shot forth into the empty void of nothingness, and space and time came into existence.
Matter, Dark Matter, and Dark Energy, rippled across time and space
causing matter to be formed into balls of light called stars and balls of matter called planets.
Moons whirled around planets and planets whirled around stars, and comets and meteors raced in-between.
As Matter and Dark Matter and Dark Energy continued to move together in intricately patterned steps,
solar systems danced themselves into galaxies
and galaxies sang together in praise of the One who made them.

The universe is so big, God –
the unobservable universe 250 times the size of the observable one,
the observable universe composed of 250 billion to 2 trillion galaxies,
and our own Milky Way made up of 100-400 billion stars!
The universe is so big, God!
If the Milky Way were the size of North America, our solar system would be but the size of a quarter,
and if our solar system was the size of a football field, earth would be but a single grain of sand!
The universe is so big, God!
And you are bigger so you encompass it all!

But there is not only a universe out there, there is a universe inside as well –
a universe made up of atoms – miniature planets of electrons whirling around their proton/neutron suns –
and inside these atoms, the elementary particles of quarks and leptons and bosons –
with up and down and top and bottom and strange and charm quarks,
and electron and muon and tau neutrinos and electrons and muons and taus leptons,
and gluons and photons and W and Z bosons
and the higgs particle.
Line up 10,000 quarks and you have something the size of an atom.
Line up a million atoms and you have something the width of a human hair.

The “stuff” of the universe is so small God,
And you are even smaller so you inhabit it all!

The force behind this amazing creation, the force we name “God”, is a force we cannot begin to comprehend.
The power of this God is completely beyond the limited scope of the human imagination!

And yet in this part of the observable universe,
within the 2 trillion galaxies,
within the 100s of billion stars in the Milky Way
and within our solar system,
God has provided us with a home here on Planet Earth,
a planet of land and water, fire and air,
a world of mountains and valleys, rivers and seas, covered with sand and soil, and flowers and trees,
an earth filled with insects and reptiles, and fish and amphibians, and birds and mammals.

As Luther said,

“I believe that God has made me and all that exists.

God has given me my body and soul ... my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

God also gives me food & drink, clothing & shelter, family & friends, earth & its creatures, & all that I have.

God richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

God defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.”

[Luther’s Small Catechism, explanation of the First Article of the Apostles Creed]

And if this wasn’t enough, God entered this world as a human being,
as a baby named Jesus, who grew into a man
who understood that the whole purpose of our lives was to love God, and to love all that God has created.

The Creator of gluons and galaxies,
the Creator of muons and Milky Way,
the Creator of strange quarks and solar system,
the Creator of electrons and earth,
the Creator of the higgs particle and our home,
became incarnate, enfleshed, embodied, God in human form.

The Creator of all that exists took on human form to experience the fullness of human existence,
to know pain & suffering, happiness & joy, grief & sorrow, faith & hope, stress & anxiety, comfort & peace.

And tonight we are here to celebrate this fact: that this All-Powerful Creator is also the All-Loving Redeemer
who understands our every thought & feeling, who forgives our every failure, & who redeems our every defeat.

Tonight we are here to celebrate that the Powerful Love that has brought 2 trillion galaxies into existence
and causes the electrons to dance within every atom,
is the same Powerful Love that was born in a manger in Bethlehem.

But more than that, we are here to celebrate that the Powerful Love that was born in a manger in Bethlehem
is the same Powerful Love that lies as a seed planted in every human heart.

The Powerful Love that sings the ever expanding universe into being
and provides the music to which every sub-atomic particle dances,
was born in Jesus who showed us that when we love God and love all that God has made,
we enter into the song and dance of creation.

Tonight as we lift our voices in prayer and praise
we join with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, and everything else in the unobservable universe,
we join with our sun and moon and all the stars in the observable universe,
we join with land and sea, fire and wind, plants and animals, and every child of every time and every place
to celebrate the One who has both the power to create all that is and the love to care about you and me.

Tonight we are here to celebrate a mystery, a God too big to even imagine
who loved us enough to come down to our size, to the size of a baby,
a gift of love small enough for Mary and Joseph to hold in their arms.

We are here tonight to celebrate God’s gift of love
that’s small enough to live in our hearts and yet big enough to change our world.

Tonight may that Powerful Love fill your body and mind and heart and soul!
And may you know the hope and peace and joy and love of Christmas. **Amen**