

Blue Christmas Dec 19, 2019

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Psalm 121

Wild Geese by Mary Oliver

The people who walk in darkness
see a great light;
those who live in a land of deep darkness—
on them light shines.

Light is a beloved metaphor for God – the church uses it a lot, but we’re not the only ones – the human experience of light is quite universal. We bask in the long days of summer, while in the winter we gravitate toward candlelight and the fires in our wood stoves . . . we hold our flashlights close on dark Gabriola nights like these and, are always prepared for a power outage. In dark corners of the world we can still look up to see the sky brilliantly lit with stars. Light is hope when our lives seem dark, because we know intuitively that light says to the darkness, “I beg to differ.”¹ Light is also associated with insight or a breakthrough, like someone turning a light on inside of us, lighting a space previously unknown or unexplored.

For so many reasons light is special and unique, but this is my favourite . . . when we detect light with our eyes, we see these tiny photons moving around at light speed, illuminating objects so we can see them. But if we were able to hop on the back of a photon and see the world through their eyes, we would see something quite strange indeed. We would see all of space at every moment in time simultaneously. From the photon’s perspective, it is not constrained by space and time, rather it occupies all of it . . . always and forever. So, A. science is awesome, and B. that sounds a lot like God to me.

God is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. God invites us into God’s story of love, life, brokenness, waiting, healing, and love’s new life emerging. Everything in the universe participates in cycles of renewal. Here at the darkest time of the year, we might remember the promise of sunrise, the promise of spring, the promise of a new moon revealing a sliver of light from the sun.

Leonard Cohen says, there’s a crack in everything . . . that’s how the light gets in. It is in light’s nature to break into the darkness. The light says you are not alone and this is not the end of the story. My childhood pastor gave me Mary Oliver’s poem one Christmas about 20 years ago . . . I can’t remember why.

¹ Mary Jo Leddy

It struck me differently when I read it this time. I just hear her saying yes . . . yes there is regret, yes there is despair, yes, there is connection in the midst of it, yes seasons continue to turn, and yes God continues to invite us forward into possibility. God doesn't move quickly, sometimes the waiting seems endless, but it will not be forever . . . the light will come. Thanks be to God.