

Christmas Eve 2016
The Rev Dee Anne Dodd
St. Paul's, Wallingford CT

From this evening's epistle:

"When the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared ..."

The joy and mystery of Christ Jesus born anew
is celebrated not only
in grand and elegant occasions like this
but in the mundane, sometimes trying, every day of our lives.
One of the gifts of occasions like this
is to help train ourselves to recognize Christ Jesus
in the world around us when we leave this place.

The birth of God's own, Jesus, into this world
isn't just something that happened back then;
it happens in our lives here and now.

One of the ways we celebrate this truth here
is our "Christmas Poetry Jam" held the Sunday *after* Christmas Day
(this year, January 1)
when a few parishioners read a few poems.
This year we're including a poem called
"Christmas Mail" by Ted Koozer,
former U.S. poet laureate and longtime Nebraska resident.

I mention the Nebraska/upper Plains connection, I guess, because,
well -- have you ever seen the movie "Fargo"?
I always imagine the mail carrier in this poem
as the Frances McDormand character in that movie --
a very pregnant public servant named "Marge".
But you hear it however it speaks to you...

Christmas Mail by Ted Koozer

*Cards in each mailbox,
angels, manger, star and lamb,
as the rural carrier,*

*driving the snowy roads,
hears from her bundles
the plaintive bleating of sheep,
the shuffle of sandals,
the clopping of camels.
At stop after stop,
she opens the little tin door
and places deep in the shadow
the shepherd and the wisemen,
the donkeys lank and weary,
the cow who chews and muses.
And from her styrofoam cup,
white as a star and perched
on the dashboard, leading her
ever into the distance,
there is a hint of hazelnut,
and then a touch of myrrh.*

A touch of myrrh...

I pray that these days of Christmas will be for you,
and this world that God so loves,
as the healing balm of frankincense.
I pray that each gift be given and received in love,
as pure gold.

And most of all, I pray that as you look into the faces of those you love,
and those you find difficult to love,
you see the divine,
Christ Jesus born anew.

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