

The Right Reverend Kimberly D. Lucas:

To the honor and glory of God, who by the Word and through the Spirit creates, redeems, and sanctifies us all. Amen.

I am so excited to see all of your beautiful faces here. I mean, there is a Denver Broncos game happening right now. It's good to be here with you on this beautiful, holy night. A few years ago at Quest, the diocesan youth event, my missionary Elizabeth noticed a kid leaving the hall where the band was playing. She followed him out and found him staring at the night sky. She inquired if he was okay, and the kid said, "Yes, it was just really loud in there." Then the kid leveled her with a look and said, "You know, the Bishop of Colorado is a nerd." And since I had given birth to said kid, I will confess. I cannot deny it. He's not wrong and this sermon will kind of prove that in many ways.

While I was reading this text from Luke that is so familiar to us, I went way down the nerd rabbit hole. I got stuck on that bit of the passage where the angel speaks to the shepherds, and then this phrase, a multitude of the heavenly hosts. So I started digging through the Greek as one does, and I came across the word that is translated hosts, and it's a word *stratia*. And *stratia* is the feminine of *stratos* which is the word for army. So it's like heavenly army. But in some texts, *stratia* has been used to refer to celestial bodies.

And so I Googled "What does the galaxy sound like?" And y'all, there is an observatory that has taken images from telescopes, the light waves, particles, waves, particles, whatever it is, and translated it into sound waves through a process called sonification, which has too much physics for me to even think about. But, but, the galaxy has a sound and it sounds like music except for black holes. They sound like a very large animal with indigestion.

But the galaxy, the stars, the planets, the dust has a sound and that's just crazy, right? But imagine, imagine a Creator who not only knows the music of the universe, but also sings it. Imagine this Trinitarian perfection singing the song of the universe, looking at this little ball what we call earth and the hot mess that humanity was and says, "Hey, let's be a baby." See, this insane thing of incarnation is offered to us, gifted to us as the solution for our human brokenness. It is the duct tape for our fractured relationships. It is hope. With incarnation, God reimagines and recreates the divine relationship with all of creation. And this incarnation insists that you and I engage our imaginations.

Now, I want to be clear. Imagination is not fantasy. Imagination is the faculty, the gift, the ability of forming new ideas or images or concepts not present to our physical or immediate senses. Imagination is about possibility. And while our eternal God offers us amazing possibilities, we more often than not, settle for the boring, broken paths that the world lays out for us. The path of greed, the path of violence, the path of apathy and maybe that's because we're afraid. You see, imagination bids us let go of the lie of certainty. Imagination calls us to the very edge of our experience, the very edge of our knowledge and that can be scary. We cannot focus on possibility when we're afraid.

But hear again, hear again the message of the angel, the angel that says to the shepherds, and I'm going to not say it the way that it is usually translated because I'm a geek that way. The messenger says to the shepherds, "Do not be fearing." I love that because the tense of that verb means it's continuous. Do not be fearing ever, at any time. Do not be fearing but instead,

and here's another word that's badly translated. It's often translated, behold, or see. I love the King James translation of low because do is not about what our eyes do. It's not about seeing. It's about becoming aware. It's about realizing and recognizing the truth that is right in front of you.

That our Creator, our Creator cherishes this flesh we inhabit. That our God has become the very breath that enlivens us, that love that made us wants nothing more than for us to dwell in them as they dwell in us. But that kind of thinking takes imagination. Can you imagine it? Can you imagine yourself so loved? Can you imagine yourself well rested in a world that tells us exhaustion is a badge of honor? Can you imagine a world where white superiority is not the norm and where every skin tone and every gender and every body type is beautiful? Can you imagine real and lasting peace, not just in the Holy Land, but in the whole world? Can you imagine living lives that are in tune and in harmony with our planet instead of exploiting its resources and creatures? Can you imagine a world in which every soul has what it needs, not just to survive but to thrive? Can you imagine that table with infinite leaves where every human is invited to share this redemption feast? Because that takes imagination.

Our human suffering, our alienation, our brokenness, I believe is as much about a lack of imagination as anything. Our God who is relationship, calls us to relationship, to right relationship, to good relationship, and good relationship and imagination go hand in hand. Good relationships empower us to imagine different possibilities and imagination allows us to build better, deeper, more beautiful relationships. And I suspect that is the secret of incarnation.

Philosopher and mathematician, Pythagoras, declared physical matter is music solidified. Can you hear it? Can you hear the angels singing? Can you hear the music of the universe? Can you hear heaven's hymn of glad tidings for all people singing, God so loved, so loves this world because if that is true, the possibilities are endless. Amen.

Audience:

Amen.