

In the Beginning (A Love Story)

First Congregational Church Branford
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Genesis 1:1-4

And, now, where it all began:

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

John 1:1-5, 14

And, also where it began:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the word of God for the people of God.

I wrote this story, with a little help from Science, lifting up *The Greatest Story Ever Told*.

This is a story about Love.

Before the world was formed, when God was young, he had a lot of fun - with *nothing*. *Nothing* was all God knew. He had joy in his heart - not that he called it joy - he just **was** joy - you know? He *was* joy, contentment, love. In the beginning was the love *impulse* - which we'd learn later was "the Christ", *who was in the beginning with God, in who all things came into being*. But, for now, God had *himself*, and it was enough.

Things stayed this way for gazillions of years, more years than our mind can

fathom! And, then one day, 6-12 billion years ago, God had this *impulse* to **create** - he didn't know he was creating - its like there was all this energy of love/joy/peace/whoosh and it all just got so intense it exploded - BANG! - into what became many worlds, many universes, many galaxies, many solar systems.

And, God saw what he had done, and he was **amazed** and **overjoyed**, and called it **good**. Then, God created the earth, 2 billion years *after* the solar system... it was formed from dust and debris from the asteroids, meteors and comets. God created color - first, dark and bright, which became night and day; then blue and green, which became water, sky, and grass. Then, God created single-celled organisms - and, they did whatever single-celled organisms do. And, they were **loved** and **good**.

God desired something to enjoy all this, so 230 million years ago, he came up with the idea to make creatures that lived in water. Then, he made creatures that lived on land. He made these big and small creatures, which we later called dinosaurs - some swam in water, others walked on earth, and some flew in the sky! God created bodies to need fuel; some of the animals he made to eat vegetation, but some of the other animals needed protein - and so it was, that on that very day, the survival of the fittest was introduced to God's world. And, it was **good**.

Things went along for 130 million years, and then an asteroid blew up the earth and everything perished. But, from death to life would be the Creator's way. What came out of the wreckage were new forms of plants and animals. And, God **loved** them and called them **good**.

God's *artistry* was developing and the creatures that evolved next, a brief 2.2 million years ago, sort of looked human.... A **scant** 120,000 years ago, these creatures began to have the skull and brain that we have. Human beings have accomplished a great deal in such a short time! That's what a more realized brain will give you. So, who knows where God is headed in this great cosmic plan.

ANYWAY, in this miraculous love story, God always found creative ways to communicate with everything he created. He had some extremely interesting communication with our developing species. It just knocked God's socks off when they discovered fire! That was a great, great day, and God was seeing all kinds of potential - always planning and thinking ahead, God was!

A brief detour - to put this in perspective, our bible only begins about 4,000 years ago - human beings had been living for 75,000 years in Africa, Europe, and Asia, 69,000 years before Christ, which means that God had had a lot of experience with humans, who he **loved** and called **good**.

Once human beings were *evolved*, it began to make for a very interesting,

oftentimes TENSE relationship - especially when humans acted like **they** were God.

And, now it is time, to go straight to the heart - where all of this love was building - where all of this love began in the beginning – it was coming full circle – in the Christ.

God had seen the way of humans, he had seen the consequences of giving them free will, and while God could not take free will away from humankind, it became clear to him that something had to be done. Things had really gone downhill, each one out for himself - not at all what he had intended - they acted no better than the dinosaurs! He was distraught over all of the scheming, the preying on, the brutality, and dishonesty. It broke his God's heart. Sometimes he regretted that he'd promised old man Noah that he would never again send a flood to ruin the earth!

But, then, God *remembered* the love with which he created them... *Then*, he began to wonder what it would be like to be one of them. God thought, "If I want them to love me, to come to me, I have to understand the hardships they experience." He wanted to know our emotions, our despair, our concerns, our sadness, our joys. He wanted to know our temptations. He wanted to know what drives us to sin.

He knew, at the start, that not everyone would be reached. Many would be skeptical. Many would feel threatened by God on earth. But, still, in love and excitement, he said, "I'm going."

He looked far and wide for the perfect conditions. He chose a young girl, an unmarried girl, a poor girl, a righteous child who loved God so. And, he found a father for himself. God loved the man Joseph. He adored his carpentry skills, his humility, loyalty and devotion. He found this pair, and he entered Mary's uterus at the right moment, everything merging together as it should.

For God **so loved** the world that he gave *himself*, his only begotten *son*.

In that blessed, mysterious moment, he became both Father and Son.

The son was born in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem, where he was loved and adored by his earthly mother and father, by shepherds, angels and magi. He was grateful to the animals who shared their home with him. It was *wonderful* to be a newborn child, all innocent and new, loved and good.

Fast forward, God helped Jesus find disciples to get the Word out – that God loves us, and wants a closer relationship with us, like that of a Father; and, that we need to love him back, to love ourselves, and love each other - *especially* those who have little, who are sick, who are oppressed. God had decided that it would

be the weak, not the strong, who would inherit the earth. And, God called them good.

...It didn't take long. Matthew, Mark, and Luke say 1 year; John says 3, before love turned tragic. The political and religious leaders had enjoyed being the strong!, the ones with the answers, the ones people looked to. The Father witnessed again just how far his people would go when they're afraid, jealous, and insecure. They tried to stop his ministry. But, he wouldn't be stopped. He kept telling the truth of God's love, and confronting leaders about their wrongdoings. Jerusalem had long stoned preachers who came there to pass judgment upon the way things were done. It would be no different for the Son – he was whipped and beaten... And, God, in his heaven, and God, on his earth, understood bodily torment and suffering... he understood suffering - *and* what it was like to lose a child... They took him to the cross and crucified him. And, in the Greatest Love ever told... He still loved them - he **forgave** them - even the worst of them. *This* is how far God would go to show his love. It would be the meaning of the **Good** News, that even the worst crime can be forgiven!!! Because he **loves** us.

Well, the story couldn't end with death having the last word. That had never been God's way. God needed his Son's friends to tell the story - and there was only one way they were going to do that, and that was to do as he said he would - he would rise - and come back to them. So, he did; and he said he would live forever, and that when *their* time came they would live with him. Then he said, "Now, go and tell: that a light shines in the darkness, that the darkness did not overcome it! **Nothing** can stand in the way of Love!"

Nothing can stand in the way of Love!

Go! Tell!

And, they did. And, we still do.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, love and only love. Amen.

