

Not Ordinary Church

Deep Into the Dark

Allyson Sawtell, 12/5/20

Christmas is
contradiction and wonder
soft candle-light and fear

Christmas goes deep into the dark, yet we search for it in glitter,
and we decorate with tinsel the tears of
those left behind
those left out
those left alone.

Christmas goes deep into the dark to meet us there;
deep into the dark to touch with power those left behind, those left out, those left alone

Christmas is where points of pain meet, yet are met with something of life,

Christmas is raising a candle together in the dark, daring to sing of love.

Christmas taps us on the shoulder with a shepherd's crook,
and we begin to smell the sheep,
and the unwashed bodies of their keepers who
simply say, "Come with us,..."

They're the ones who really know the way to Bethlehem:
Where lament and possibility intertwine, not destroying each other,
but listening.
Where love and loss sit side by side,
like two old people on a park bench,
one occasionally resting their head on the other's shoulder.

Because Christmas is not some celestial pastry in the "sweet-by-and-by..."
but finds its home in the dirt and the blood and the sinew of each of us.

Christmas is
warmth and cold
light and dark
joy and pain
work and rest
mystery and surprise

But always a presence
of something holy
of community
of dancers in the dark
of candlelight's defiance, power, and hope

of laughter and song
of you, of me
and the sacred spaces between and among and within us.



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