

# WHEN A CHILD IS BORN

Sermon by Karen Hilfman Millson  
St. Paul's United Church, Orillia  
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GOSPEL READING: based on John 1: 1-9, 14

On Thursday morning, I arose early to prepare to head to the hospital to meet Sarah and Darren for our second day of encouraging the birth of their babe. In the early morning light a song kept nudging its way into my consciousness..... but the only words that I could remember were “When a child is born...” I quickly pulled up the words on the internet... then left a message for Rachael to change my sermon title to “When A Child Is Born”.

I had glanced at the first three verses of the song – and they captured for me the wonder of birth ... and how it takes us to a new place of awareness.

When A Child Is Born

A ray of hope flickers in the sky  
A tiny star lights up way up high  
All across the land dawns a brand new mom

This comes to pass  
When a child is born

A silent wish sails the seven seas  
The winds of change whisper in the trees  
And the walls of doubt crumble tossed and torn.

This comes to pass,  
When a child is born

A song here settles all around  
You get the feel, you're on solid ground  
For a spell or two no one seems forlorn

This comes to pass,  
When a child is born ....

There is something about being in the presence of a child newly born...

- it brings us back to what really matters
- it helps us to hear again the song of the angels that awaken within us the living love we long to be born within our hearts
- it fills us with hope and an outpouring of love and commitment to giving new life to the song of the angel of peace on earth – goodwill toward all.

Later that day I looked at the song again and I read the part that is spoken in the song:

*And all of this happens, because the world is waiting.  
Waiting for one child: black, white, red, yellow  
no one knows....*

But a child that will grow up and turn tears to laughter, hate to love, war to peace and everyone to everyone's neighbour, and misery and suffering will be words to be forgotten forever.

I found myself responding that: the vision's right – but this idea that we are waiting for one particular child to bring this vision about – felt like a longing we have let go of ... There's a phrase often repeated these days that shifts our consciousness of God's call to us – a phrase that says – we are the ones we've been waiting for.

We are the children that are called to help turn tears to laughter, hate to love, war to peace and everyone to everyone's neighbour so that misery and suffering will be words to be forgotten forever.

The song goes on and says:

*It's all a dream and illusion now,  
It must come true sometime soon somehow,  
All across the land dawns a brand new morn,  
This comes to pass when a child is born.*

When a child is born – something reawakens within us ... there's a universal response to babies – a sigh, an awe – that rises up from deep within reconnecting us to that living love that waits to be born anew in our hearts.

And when that love is reawakened we see with new eyes ... we see the world differently – not with rose coloured glasses that sees only the good – but with eyes that see with love ... and so we see the blessings more clearly > and we see how we are all connected, but when love is reawakened within us we also see the suffering and the needless waste more

clearly as well – we see the absurdity of decisions that are being made in our world that promote the growth of wealth and comfort for some at the expense of the lives of others.

I will always remember a phone call I had with my younger sister Wendy. It was a few weeks after she'd given birth prematurely to twins – too early for them to live. As she shared her grief – a wail rose up within her that life was too painful ... for now she was so aware of the pain of the world. She told me that she used to be able to watch the evening news with an objectivity that kept the stories of suffering and injustice at a distance ... but now the tears of a mother in a distant land brought her to tears ... That's what happens when a child is born – it reawakens us to our profound connection to one another ... to the awareness that what happens to one of us – happens to all of us ... the moments of joy as well as the reality of the brutality of systems that are filled with injustice ... when a child is born it has the power to reawaken us to see with eyes of love – to see both the hurts and the hopes of the world ... to see what could be, and to see within - each other the fights we need to journey toward peace and goodwill knowing as we travel – that we are not alone, we are surrounded and upheld by God's love.

Yesterday, we gathered here to celebrate the life of Thelma Crysdale. Thelma's granddaughter Carolyn read from some of Thelma's' writing including a poem that Thelma wrote in early 2007 at, I think the age of 92, reflecting back on Christmas.

The poem concludes with these thoughts....

But there on T.V. were such scenes of despair.  
The needs of the world almost too much to bear.  
So people of all faiths, or no faith at all  
Dug deep in their pockets for funds large and small.  
And ever so quietly, God's love, once again  
Crept into the hearts of both women and men.

It's a call to all people to make LOVE their goal  
Instead of the hatred that's taking it toll.  
We can hear God exclaim, from the glorious heights  
"I am with you forever, no matter your plight."

Now we have the gift of a New Year – unknown  
But of one thing I'm certain:  
We'll not walk alone!