

**GOD WITH US**  
**Sermon Series: Power in the Name**  
**Christmas Eve –December 24, 2014 --Matthew 1: 18-23**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

Having been born in Washington Hospital and been raised for most of my life in this area I really didn't understand how grey, cloudy and overcast the Pittsburgh area truly is. On average there are only 60 sunny days in Pittsburgh every year, out of 365 days. I lived away for about a decade and I moved back on January 1<sup>st</sup> 12 years ago, to one of the greyest winters on record. I'm not sure that the sun shined even once for a month and a half. But even though there are dark clouds in our lives, we know the sun is still there. Even when we do not see the light nor feel its warmth we know that the sun still shines. Even if we are experiencing a dark Christmas this year, we know that in the dark streets shineth the everlasting light and that the light of that first Christmas can break through and illumine our lives once again. Name the name of Jesus and the Son of God, the light of the world, will break through this year.

There are many names for Jesus in the Bible. He is the Christ (in the Greek language) and He is the Messiah (in the Hebrew). He is the cornerstone. He is the Son of David. He is both the Son of Man AND the Son of God. He is Lord and He is Savior. He is THE GREAT I AM. He is the Image of God (Hebrews 1:3) He is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, and everything in between. (Revelation 22:13) He is the Word of God; Word written and Word Living; He is the Word spoken at creation that brought everything into being. (John 1:1) He is the last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45) and He is the second Moses. He is the Living One (Revelation 1: 18). He is The Amen, the period to every sentence in life. (Revelation 3: 14) He is the TRUE LIGHT that enlightens every man (John 1: 3-19). As our scripture says: *"His name shall be called Emmanuel."* He IS GOD WITH US (Matthew 1: 23). And the angel declared that first Christmas, *"You shall call His name JESUS"*. JESUS, the name above every name; the name which holds within it every other name for HIM and for God.

We have been preaching in December on the POWER in the name of Jesus. When we invoke the name, we invoke the presence. When we invoke the presence, we invoke the power. When we name the name above every name, the name of JESUS, then HE comes to us and HE ministers to us, and HE brings everything that God intends to bless us with in life. When we name the name above every name, at the Name of Jesus the light shineth in the darkness and Christmas comes. Name the name of Jesus and the Christ Child is reborn into the manger of our heart. Name the name of Jesus and the light of the world is reborn into our dark. Our scripture's significance for Christmas Eve is this –Christmas comes about in this particular way, announces the angel. *"You shall call His name Jesus"*. And when you name the name of Jesus, then and only then, He comes and then and only then He is born and reborn. When we name the name of Jesus then it is that God becomes our Emmanuel. God becomes *"God with us"*. Name the name and the dear Savior enters in.

There are many names for Jesus in the Bible. He is the Bread of Life (John 6:35), the door and the gate. The Good Shepherd (10:11), The Resurrection and the Life (11:25), the Way and the Truth and the Life...and no one comes to Christmas but by HIM (John 14:6). He is the True Vine (John 15: 1-5). He is the Righteous One (Acts 3: 14). He is the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5: 5). He is the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-2) and the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3: 16); the root and offspring of David (Revelation 22: 16). He is the faithful witness (Revelation 1: 5) In the Old Testament He is predicted to be our "Immanuel" in Isaiah 7: 4) and that prophecy is fulfilled when He is named our "Emmanuel" in Matthew 1: 23. He is many things and many names. But all of them are captured in the name above every name,

the name of JESUS, at which every knee will bow and every tongue confess Him as Lord. You shall name His name JESUS and in that naming HE becomes our Emmanuel, GOD WITH US.

Two Christmases ago our theme was "Follow the Star" and as part of that theme we purchased a memorial gift of the STAR of Bethlehem. We hung it up there in the chancel area where you see it this night. Follow the Star and come to church on Christmas, get it? And as I was emerging from the little door over to the one side at the 11am service, unbeknownst to me, I stepped on the extension cord for the star and as I was standing and beholding the Star of Bethlehem, like the wise man I was pretending to be, I noticed that it began to flicker, and that I began to smell the smell of burning rubber and electricity shorting out, and I looked up just in time to see the Star of Bethlehem go out. I realized I had stomped on the electrical cord and shorted out the Star of Bethlehem at the 11am service Christmas Eve. Great –what prophetic significance is it that the pastor snuffed out the Star of Bethlehem on Christmas Eve? At least I didn't electrocute myself –Now that would have been a memorable Christmas!

But for some people it does feel like the Star of Bethlehem has gone out. Maybe they have experienced some loss in their life, some darkening grief has cast a shroud on Christmas for them, some health concern has sought to extinguish the light of the world. Perhaps as many do, we suffer from what is referred to as Seasonal Affective Disorder, SAD, and the darkest actual day of the year falling right before Christmas clouds and fogs our mind and heart with depression. It is particularly poignant that the darkest day of the year, the vernal equinox, in the city of Pittsburgh with only 60 days of cloudlessness and sun, falls so close to the season of light, to Christmas. All the fa-la-la-las make us feel like we SHOULD be happy, even when we are not. Perhaps all the light and joy of the season only makes what some face as darkness and clouds of depression just feel that much darker and gloomier. It may only double the pain. Yet, into this world, into these dark streets, the everlasting light still shineth. Like a good Pittsburgher we know that even though there may be clouds obscuring the nighttime sky over Christmas, that still the Star of Bethlehem shines with a light which nothing in this world can extinguish.

There are many names for Jesus in the Bible. He is the heir of all things (Hebrews 1: 2). Chief shepherd (I Peter 5:4). He is Prince (Acts 5: 31), Rabbi (John 1: 38), Horn of Salvation (Luke 1: 69). He is the Consolation of Israel (Luke 1: 68). He is the Deliverer and the Redeemer (Romans 11: 26). He is author and perfecter of salvation (Hebrews 2: 10). He is Mediator (I Timothy 2:5), and High Priest (Hebrews 3: 1). He is Lord of Lords and He is King of Kings. He is WONDERFUL. He is Counselor. He is MIGHTY GOD. He is PRINCE OF PEACE. He is the Bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16). He is the Rising Sun. (Malachi 4: 2) He is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD (John 8:12). As the Gospel of John declares: *"In HIM was life and that life was the LIGHT of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."* (John 1: 4-5)

But this night we name the name above every name. **We name the name of JESUS.** For in naming the name of Jesus HE comes. He becomes our Emmanuel. He becomes GOD WITH US. HE personally comes to minister to us. Invoke His name and we invoke His presence and when we invoke His presence then we invoke His power to enlighten and brighten and illumine a dark and darkening world. There is POWER in the name of Jesus to have His light enlighten our life and cause darkness to flee away. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Light of the World. Be our Emmanuel. Be born in us this night. Be GOD WITH US. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Name above every name COME and make Christmas your own this year. Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*