

Sermon Title: **“Love and Jesus Christ”**

Bible: **Luke 2:1-20**

When: on Christmas Eve Sunday, December 24th, 2023

Where: about 40 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Merry Christmas! Thank you so much again for coming to our Christmas Eve Service! Our church is filled with beautiful poinsettias and decorated with Christmas trees and lights.

Have you ever wondered what it looked like before the invention of electric lights? Before electric lights, real candles were used, even on the Christmas trees. (Slide of Martin Luther’s Christmas Tree) It might have been dangerous, but candles were the only way to have light in the darkness. Why did people put lights on Christmas trees? In my research, there are various explanations about the origin of Christmas lights. But one idea makes sense to me. That idea is to symbolize the stars in the sky, because the wise men followed a star from the East to Bethlehem in search of a newborn king.

When we look at the stars at night, they are very small. Some of the stars cannot be seen, even in the darkness or even with the naked eye. To look at some stars, we need a special space telescope, like the Hubble Space Telescope. The Hubble Space Telescope is located not on the earth, but in low Earth orbit, beyond our earth, so it can catch a lot of stars that our human eyes cannot see. (Slide of Hubble Ultra Deep Field from NASA) When we see a star with our bare eyes, it might be just a tiny dot. But when we see it through the Hubble Space

Telescope, it is not just a tiny dot, but it has a lot of beautiful stars. One time, when the scientists decided to look at the empty space where nothing had been observed, except darkness, they discovered that it was neither darkness nor emptiness, but it is filled with a lot of beautiful stars, too. It just took a little more time of exposure to discover these amazing facts! And with the James Webb Space Telescope, we can see even a great deal more. (Slide of Hubble and Webb Side by Side image) This is the beauty of science.

How could God become a little baby Jesus? A baby is so small and so vulnerable, compared to the stars and the universe. God, the creator of heaven and earth, became a human being on this tiny earth in order to be with us. Christians confess that the baby is Jesus Christ, our God and our Lord. This is the mystery of our faith.

And we feel God's love through the baby Jesus and throughout this Christmas season. Jesus came to us as the light! The light can be tiny. But this light comes to us even two thousand years later. You might think of yourselves as tiny ones compared to our universe or our history. But with the lens of God's love, you are not small, not tiny, but great, awesome, and beautiful. This is God's amazing love and grace! That's because you are God's creation, and that's because you are God's loved ones. Shall we say to each other with the lens of God's love? **"You are God's creation."** **"You are God's loved one."** And merry and merrier Christmas!