

These are tremendous texts: they situate our local ‘coming together’ here in Turvey in a far wider setting – indeed, in the largest setting possible: the beginning and end of all meaning:

*Through him all things came to be,  
not one thing had its being except through him.*

Nothing (no-thing) is excluded from this total claim. It’s all or nothing (no-thing) and this source and creator of all things – that is, everything – must necessarily be the source and creator of all meaning, where we must necessarily go if we want to find out what it’s all about, what *I* am all about. But what we find when we embark on this search is that this source and creator of all meaning has already come to us:

*The Word was the true light that enlightens all people  
... He was in the world that had its being through him  
and the world did not know him.*

Christ is the climactic instance of this but it’s not as if God’s Word was absent before and is absent since. God’s Word is the sustaining principle of all that exists and has ever existed or will come to exist, and can be read out of creation at all times, but also, at all times, we can miss the point: we can fail to see what’s really going on, what it’s all about. Christ comes to make it all obvious – but does he? Born in a stable, in a minor town, in a minor state to a people unknown to most of the world. Surely, God could have done it better! But the point of the impoverished Christ-child is that if God can do this here, make God known here, then God can do this anywhere. I sometimes wonder whether, far from Christians being privileged, in this respect, the rest of the world is waiting for us to catch up; meaning that we have this most amazing truth to impart or embody but have misunderstood its application or connection to the rest of the world. It’s not just us, with special knowledge, preserving and imparting a special gift for others but us, at last, recognising that this gift is already present everywhere and is as likely to reach us from others as it is for others to receive it from us. This makes the world a very exciting place, but the subtle temptation is then to look elsewhere for this truth of God’s presence and fail to find it here. There was a book published recently by a convert to Orthodox Christianity who had tried many other branches of Christianity and found them all wanting, only to find that his final destination was imperfect, too. I wonder when, and if, he gets to heaven he would like to re-arrange the furniture there as well. In other words: this tremendous truth of God’s incarnation, of God’s coming to dwell with us in the most obscure of places, and persecuted of people, is telling us that we don’t have to look anywhere else to find God or meaning, more or less present than in this place here, among this people here, at this present time. What we are giving thanks for, in our eucharist, is the gift of God to each of us through one another. If we can’t learn to find that gift here then we’re highly unlikely, I would suggest, to find it anywhere else. This is the local made global, or, in the words of John’s prologue (slightly modified),

*But to all who did accept him (in one another)  
he gave power to become children of God.*

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