

Peace and Joy be with you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

*As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been "Yes and No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason, it is through him that we say the "Amen", to the glory of God.*

Dear congregation!

We live in a No kind of world. Our children learn this two-letter word already very early in their life. No, don't touch that! No, don't go there! No, you can't do this. No, you can't do that. This "No" carries over and on well into our adult lives too: No, you caused this terrible thing to happen. No, don't be who you are, be who I want you to be. No, God doesn't want you doing that. No, you can't worship here because you aren't one of us. No, you've got nobody to blame but yourself. No, no, no.

Many people find it difficult to say a clear Yes! It begins already with ourselves. Can you say Yes to yourself and your life? Your past and your present? Many people live with a big No against themselves, denying who they are. The most difficult thing to say Yes to is our own fate or destiny. Sometimes all we see is a big fat No when it comes to our relationships with family, friends, spouses, colleagues. It is then that we also discover our deep longing for true love, for a true and unambiguous Yes for ourselves and our lives. Many people also go to church today in search of this unequivocal Yes.

For Paul, everything depends on whether GOD says Yes or No to us. And he writes to the congregation in Corinth with very clear words that God has really said Yes to us; not Yes/No or maybe but YES! Jesus Christ is God's Yes for us! We cannot say this Yes to ourselves. We need someone to say it to us, to proclaim it to our ears and hearts, today, and in these coming days especially: God says YES to you!

Christmas means God coming into this world and into each and every person's life with a big YES! Yes, I love you! Yes, you are important to me! Yes, you are wanted! Yes, your life has a higher purpose and meaning! Yes, Yes, Yes, God says to you! He gave you life and set you free in Jesus Christ who was born for you and for me. This is the Gospel that is to resound in your ears and especially in your hearts today!

We would not be who we are today without God's "Yes!" and we will not be the people God intends us to be apart from God's "Yes!" In fact, we would not even be/exist without God's "Yes!" And of course, the most beautiful thing about God's "Yes!" is that it is a gift of grace, a free gift given out of love.

Once received, we need to do something with it. We can ignore it. We can lock it away in the closet. Dump it somewhere in the corner. Or, we can say Amen to it! Which is another word for Yes, let it be so! We can receive it and make it count for our lives. We may trust that God loves us and join the voices of praise of the angels and Mary. We can simply let Christmas happen to us. Like it happened to Mary; she did not particularly look for or even want her pregnancy, it simply happened to her. But then she also realized that her life got a deeper meaning and purpose, which, without God, she would never have experienced. In the same way God's Yes comes and happens to us again today, right now at Christmas especially. All we really can do is say Amen to the greatest gift of all! Let it be with me according to your Word. Yes, let it be so!

Amen.