

“A Christmas Conspiracy”

Part V of VI in the sermon series,
“The Advent/Christmas Conspiracy”
Luke 2:1-20

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From the Pulpit

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A Christmas Eve Meditation delivered by The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, Sr. Minister, The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, December 24, 2015, 7:30 p.m. service, dedicated to my grandson, Benton Myles Ahrens on his first Christmas, to Henry Wade who loves Star Wars and to all the children of First Church and all children of all faith and no faith at all across the globe tonight that we may deliver them a better world through the love and power of God and as always, dedicated to the glory of God!

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Luke 1:1-20

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Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of each one of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our salvation. Amen.

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The Force has awakened. It happened six nights as “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” hit the big screens across our planet. Here’s the story – although I will give it all away for those few of us left in the room who have yet to see the movie...

Almost 30 years after the destruction of the second [Death Star](#), [Luke Skywalker](#), the last [Jedi](#) Knight has disappeared. Looking a lot like Darth Vader's old order of soldiers, "The [First Order](#)" has risen from the remains of the fallen [Galactic Empire](#). They seek to eliminate Luke and the [Republic](#) – once and for all. But, the Resistance, backed by the Republic and led by Luke's sister, [Leia Organa](#) (who all of us old-timers know as Princess Leia), opposes them while searching for Luke to enlist his aid. Joined by the old guys Han Solo and Chewbacca aboard the Millennium Falcon, newcomers Rey and Finn and the new droid named BB-8 set out to save the universe and become reunited with Luke Skywalker. Watch out Evil Kylo Ren and Snoke! The Force has awakened!

It is very important for you to know about the "Awakened Force" this Christmas Eve – or I wouldn't have told you! Like the "Resistance," we are being called to awake from our slumber and follow the God-Light or the "Force" that is within each of us. Tonight, we are being called to wake up and return to the barn in Bethlehem where we will reconnect with the Light of the World, the Word of God, the Force of Life we know as Jesus Christ. Make no mistake about it, "The First Order" - the Order of Darkness is REAL. It seeks to destroy all that is good in this world. In our Bible in the Gospel of John, we hear these words, "The

Light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5). Jesus is the Light of God and all that Darkness, hate, destruction bring cannot overcome the Light of Jesus Christ.

What we have not heard in tonight’s Bible readings – but we will hear soon in the coming weeks – is that the Empire, The First Order in Jesus’ time – sought to kill him right after he was born. His mother and father picked up their baby and escaped into the night and found their way through the Sinai Desert to the land of Egypt. In Egypt to this day – 2000 years later – Egyptian Christians speak of Jesus growing up in their country. As a young boy – our Savior, our Jedi Knight, our Luke Skywalker – did amazing things. Egyptian Christians tell you stories of his miracles as a boy. He saved adult lives. He healed other children. The Force was Strong in this One! He was Obiwan Kenobi, Yoda and Luke Skywalker all wrapped up in One! Even more – he was God’s beloved son who came to save the world.

Tonight in our Drama of the Nativity, we will see the story of Jesus’ birth come alive – once again! As the baby Jesus is laid in the wooden manger before us by Mary his mother and Joseph his earthly father, we will see angels come and adore him. We will see poor and humble shepherds come and kneel before him. We will see three

kings come with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to lay before him.

In Jesus the Force is not only strong, the Force is Complete in this One. Jesus is not just **A light** of the World. Jesus is **THE light** of the world. He is not just one of the Good Guys who takes on the darkness of this world. He is THE Best of the Best who – through the power of God – overcomes the Darkness in this world. He is THE Savior – the one who SAVES and Protects; Heals and defends us; Guides and delivers us. King Herod cannot stop **him** (for those who don't know - King Herod is the Kilo Ren of his generation!). Nothing can stop Jesus from being born and from saving the entire world with his love.

The Force Has Awakened!

I pray that the God Force our “Christ Force” will awaken within you, too. And I hope and pray that the Force that awakens is no less than God's Holy Spirit moving through you and guiding you to love others. Our Christmas Conspiracy is this – Jesus has come into the world tonight to awaken love, light and life within each of us. May His Force be with you. Amen.

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