

“A Baby...Like Other Babies”
Written by Pastor Bill Chadwick
Oak Grove Presbyterian Church
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24, 2010

Readers: Sue Rusch Anji Chadwick Bill Chadwick

A baby
 like other babies
Unknown potential
A baby
 like other babies
Tiny hands
Tiny feet
Big eyes
These eyes were dark brown
Infant hands that rested on the soft, warm breast of his mother as he nursed
Feet, marvelous things to grab, pull, place in the mouth
Tiny hands clutching his father’s strong finger
Eyes learning love from loving eyes of mama and papa
Inquisitive eyes
Exploring hands
Uncertain feet. Step Step Grin Boombottom
Hands eager to play Palestinian patty-cake
 and peek-a-boo.
A baby like other babies
Growing hands
Growing feet
Growing eyes
Active hands scrapes bruises
Feet fast, strong, running to synagogue school
Strong hands, skilled hands, shaping Hebrew characters across the
 page right to left
Strong hands, skilled hands, learning under his father’s care to use
 saw, square, compass, plane, hammer, chisel plumb line
Strong hands, skilled hands, supporting his family after his father’s death

Sandaled feet, striding purposefully to the Jordan to be baptized
Sandaled feet, striding purposefully to the wilderness

Eyes, looking full upon the temptation to use power for personal gain
 Hands knowing their way through scripture, quickly finding Isaiah's words:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
 because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
 and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

Functional feet, spreading Good News of God's Kingdom

Eyes of compassion

Hands reaching out

touching the filthy, putrid sick
 sharing the shalom of God

Willing feet, responding to need

Affirming eyes, looking upon Simon the Volatile and seeing Peter the Rock

Affirming eyes, looking upon a tax collector named Zaccheus and seeing not
 a short-statured crook

But a man hungry for recognition, forgiveness, friendship
 ready to be a giant of generosity.

Affirming eyes, looking upon a woman,
 commonly viewed as a piece of property
 an object of scorn
 a sexual plaything
 seeing instead a beautiful child of God.

Open, loving hands, eager to bless little children

Feet carrying him off to lonely places
 early in the morning, late in the night
 to be quiet with the Father

Filthy feet, being washed by the tears of a prostitute
 dried with her hair
 kissed, perfumed

Feet before which people throw themselves
 in worship
 and for mercy

Eyes looking upon everyday occurrences:
 a man planting a crop
 beautiful wildflowers
 a wedding feast
 a fig tree, a mustard plant

Seeing in daily events parables of the Kingdom of God

Eyes, weeping at the death of a friend

Eyes seeing deeper than an eye for an eye

Hands breaking man's laws for the good of men and women

Hands that like parties

freely breaking bread and pouring wine

enjoying the good gifts of God

Inclusive hands

breaking bread and pouring wine

with the outcasts of society—tax collectors, prostitutes

Miraculous hands, breaking five loaves and two fishes

and feeding a multitude

Sorrowing eyes, filling with tears over hard-hearted Jerusalem

Eyes watching a crowd cry "Hosanna! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in Heaven and Glory in the highest!

Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Feet dangling from a donkey

Discerning eyes, seeing faith and declaring forgiveness and healing

Discerning eyes, spotting hypocrisy

Discerning eyes, seeing hatred in the faces of the religious establishment,
knowing what was to come

Eyes saying No to compromise,

insisting on the redemptive power of suffering

Hands breaking the bread of Passover in the upper room

Giving it new meaning for all time

Feet climbing, finding the familiar path in darkness

to the Garden a final time

Eyes opening from prayer

recognizing in the flickering torchlight a friend's face

a kiss

Hands a final healing his captor's ear

Hands bound

Hands tearing

piercing

nailed to wood

Feet tearing

piercing

nailed to wood

Eyes even now looking with love

seeking forgiveness for his murderers

Dead eyes

Dead hands

Dead feet

Eyes Hands Feet wrapped in burial cloths
 (pause for ten seconds)
Transformed eyes Risen eyes
Transformed hands Risen hands
Transformed feet Risen feet
Feet once more carrying the Christ
 down the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus
Hands once more breaking bread with believers
Eyes once more looking with love.