



December 2020

Greetings to you.

As I'm writing this letter, I am recalling what you have shared with me over the past several months. For some, this Christmas will be a happy time of enjoying the blessings of new births, good health, and the beauty of clear winter days. For others, for a variety of reasons, this will be a season of sadness, stress, serious illness, loss of work and loss of what used to be.

No matter what our own lives are like just now, the world is suffering. We have entered the metaphorical shadows of Advent. It is from these very shadows that we can proclaim the good news, the hope in the midst of catastrophe. We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. We wait, we sing, and we pray for God's Light to overwhelm the darkness in our world.

Somehow, this year more than ever, we have to have hope. In our darkness, there is light. This is not a Pollyanna kind of thinking. This is the basis of our Christian faith.

Christmas tells us that in the midst of whatever we are experiencing, from the worst to the best, we are loved. We have people in our lives who love us. God loves us. God loves us and sends Jesus to be with us.

In Advent we make space for the important Christian practices of stillness, silence, and longing. During this past year, we have had lots of opportunity to practice those disciplines while we have all been in some degree of isolation.

But Christmas is different. After we experience the shadows of Advent, Christmas scriptures turn our hearts to hope. Jesus is the hope of all people. We contemplate the birth of Jesus as a human child at Christmas. We light candles in the gloom, we proclaim hope through the silence, and we embrace the peace and healing that Jesus brings to a world in desperate need of peace and healing.

The Gospel according to Mark describes this faith. Faith that is grounded in truth and reflected in our lives. A faith that may flicker during terrible times, but a faith that eventually sustains us. I hope we will all take the opportunity to read one page

each day of the Gospel according to Mark. This is an act of spiritual preparation for our next year together. If we start now, we will have completed the reading by Epiphany!

In whatever ways we mark Christmas, we remember that Jesus was born in a time of great danger and little comfort. While our worship is filled with awe and wonder, it is tempered by the knowledge that we are a loving community of people experiencing a variety of emotions, and we pray that each of us will be blessed with the deep peace of the knowledge that God is with us in ways we cannot fully understand, but we can trust to be true.

In whatever way you celebrate our Lord's birth, it is my prayer that it be safe and filled with joy, peace, hope and love. You are in my thoughts and my prayer. God bless you.

With love, Joan.

Christmas On-Line Services

Sunday, December 20, 2020 10:30 a.m. (Christmas Pageant)

Thursday, December 24, 2020 7:00 p.m. (Christmas Eve)

Sunday, December 27, 2020 10:30 a.m. (Carols and Lessons)