

Greetings Merging Waters,

December 23rd, 2021

As we encounter these days of uncertainty and ongoing danger this Christmas, I have kept each of you in my heart and my prayers. I have been so grateful to hear from those of you who have reached out in letters, emails, and phone calls, or who have talked after church or when we see one another in the community. I have appreciated reading family Christmas newsletters and continuing to get to know you even in these times wherein we face challenge together. I have also enjoyed the cookies and kind words that members of Merging Waters have shared as we prepare to receive the Light of all Light into the world.

And so, as we come to the end of Advent and enter the Season of Christmas with an upsurge of cases due to the newest variant of COVID-19 we are once again looking toward an online Christmas. This can be disheartening, and we all miss one another when we are apart. And yet even in the darkest times we can find a light that leads us to hope. A hope that I find in this loving community of Merging Waters, that inspires in me hope for humanity. The love you all share. The commitment to justice. The care for creation. The resilience that you have all shown, each in your own ways, throughout these trying times. The longing that each of you have for togetherness in community as a church family when we are apart, and the joy and celebration of being together when we can be.

And so, with Tuesday being the winter solstice, the longest night and shortest day of the year, I was thinking about you all and the light that you are to one another, the community and to me. The light that reflects that which we have found in the Christ Child, and my soul is brightened. It's not by chance that late December was chosen long ago as an ideal time to celebrate one of the best known of Christian messages: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it," John 1:5.

This light that we share in our work and actions of love brightens the world, as we share the Divine light that is found in the message of Christmas. It is the message that God is working to turn the world to birth life made new, in each of us, in all of us. The poorest and the richest, the youngest and oldest - each one of us ministers of the light called to shine it forth to all the world in our actions love care and compassion, justice and joviality, renewal and respect for the dignity of all life. This is the Light of Life that shines in the world through you, through your work by the Spirit.

Christmas is God who comes to us! Christmas saves us, lifts us up, fills us, and frees us! During these uncertain times, I wish you the experience of light, life, and love!

Merry Christmas,
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