

Dear Friends,

As Christians, we are called to seek, find, and be the light of Christ in the midst of the world's darkness. Sometimes, more than others, that seems to be a challenge because of what is happening in our own life or in the life of the world. This is why community matters, why our hearts yearn to come together each Sunday to be in the presence of God and each other, why we devote ourselves to prayer and holy conversation, why we develop spiritual practices that support our daily work, and why we continually draw our hearts toward something beyond us, that which is holy. It's what we do as Christians so that the joy that Jesus ushered into our world may continue in our lives as well.

As we prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus, it is important to remember that we are not only commemorating a holy event which took place several thousand years ago, but we are committing ourselves to capture that same newness of life which the baby Jesus brought into our world and which the risen Christ continually reveals to us in our daily lives- the incarnation of God into all of creation. This is what the Advent season is all about, anticipating and preparing ourselves for the arrival of something new in our lives, initiated and offered to us by our loving and living God, made real in the person of Jesus.

I invite you to spend some time with the resources within this packet, to engage with the events offered this season, and to watch for the online resources, which I will highlight in my weekly e-newsletter, so that when Christmas Day arrives, you find yourself not exhausted with the regular busyness of the season, but rather nourished and energized by the life-giving presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This time can be a gift to us, for we can go deeper within ourselves and within God – and there we may find the light of Christ, and bring it into our lives and our world.

May the joy of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, the worship of the wisemen, and the peace of the Christ child be yours and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

In Christ's love,