



# 'Till We Meet Again!

Week of January 2 and 3, 2020



## REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2020

### HOPE FOR LIFE

The Advent challenge this week is sharing the gift of hope and today's reading comes from Isaiah 51:1-8. As I reflect on the concept of hope I am struck by the complexity of the word "hope" and how we use it today. On one hand, we talk about hope as hoping for good weather or hoping that your birthday is wonderful. Both perfectly fine uses of the concept of hope, yet more superficial. Sure, we want good weather but if the weather does not cooperate it certainly is not a devastating issue. We work around it as best we can and move forward with our lives.

The hope that Isaiah talks about is a hope that really is life or death. A hope that matters for us today and tomorrow and all the days that follow. This is the hope that we receive in the gift of a tiny baby born over two thousand years ago. On this hope we build our lives. On this hope rests everything. We who seek the Lord know the story, the humble birth, the ministry that turns the values of the world upside down, the complete humiliation of the crucifixion, and then the miracle of Resurrection.

As we move through these final days of Advent, we look for hope in our Savior who is born to us. A baby born to save us, to redeem us, to love us. The hope we share in Jesus is life or death. It is the most significant hope of all lives.

The difficulty for me is to keep this hope when I see so much pain around me. There is more pain that we can articulate related to the pandemic. Each of us has pain that we share, or we keep hidden. There is no shortage of pain in our world.

And yet we of faith, put our hope in the Christmas Story, we put our hope in knowing the whole story, and knowing that God became human for us. That is hope that we can hang onto with all our might because that is true and everlasting hope. In the words of Isaiah God will deliver us, will comfort us, will enable us to be a light for the nations, mercy and justice are coming, and this salvation lasts forever.

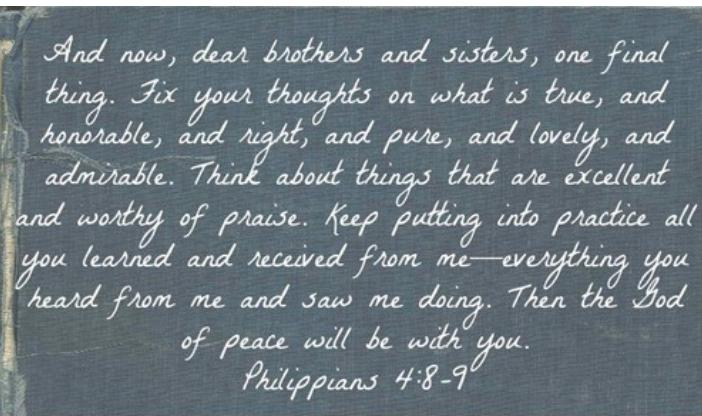
And so, once again, we are called to look intentionally at the world around us for if we do, we see that hope abounds. A member of our community of faith who is a front-line health care worker was vaccinated for Covid-19 today. More vaccine is being produced daily. That is a sign of hope amid the pandemic.

I saw the joy in the faces of young and old as we gathered to sing Christmas Carols on the lawn of Light of Christ. The joy in the faces of the children and youth playing in the snow and singing. The joy in the faces of older members and friends who drove by to hear the familiar songs of Christmas.

Yes, hope is very much alive and available to us. My prayer for this week is that we would be opened to seeing the signs of hope

that are around us. And in seeing hope we would be comforted and assured that God indeed is with us every moment of every day, forever.

In Peace,  
Pastor Suzanne



## REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY DECEMBER 29, 2020

A BLESSED NEW YEAR TO ALL!!!

### **Philippians 4:8-9**

**Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.**

As I write this final reflection for 2020, I am pausing to think about 2020 and looking forward to 2021. It feels like 2020 has been around forever! Looking back at my calendar, it almost seems like a lifetime ago that we had worship services in-person, went to meetings, had meals at restaurants, went shopping, and gathered with friends without a second thought. We have been socially distancing and wearing masks for nine months and while the end is in sight it will not be immediate. We will start 2021 out much the same as we are ending 2020.

So even though we are still wearing masks and separating ourselves physically, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Each day more people receive the COVID-19 vaccine and that is wonderful news. I am thankful for the many ways that our three congregations

have become one expanded community of faith and I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit will take us in 2021. I am grateful for the partnerships with Pastor Jerry, the staff, and the members of the UPG. I am grateful that we are all joining in ministry together.

I am not one to make New Year's resolutions, I never seem to keep them anyway but this year I want to be more intentional about the rhythm of my days. To be the best me I can be, I want to find a greater balance each day. A healthy mind, body, and spirit needs rest, nutrition, exercise, prayer, and laughter each day. As I aim to become more balanced in my life, I invite you to join me on this journey. Together we can help each other to grow and develop into the people that God created us to be.

A healthy person starts with adequate rest. The mind, the body, and the spirit all need time to refresh and rejuvenate. While the amount of sleep that each person needs is different, we can encourage one another to get the rest our bodies need. We need to fuel our bodies so let us help each other to be more intentional in eating a variety of foods so that we get our nutritional needs met. Let's get some exercise together. I am hopeful that we will be able to resume our group walks once the weather turns warmer. Walking together makes it much more fun. That also leads to some laughter too! Let's spread some cheer this year, after all laughter is known to be the best medicine!

Finally, we need to take time to talk with God in prayer and in reflection and meditation. We can not know what God is calling us to do and be if we do not listen to what God is telling us. Have daily conversations with God, make it a habit. The more we listen and talk with God, the more our relationship with God and each other will grow.

So many possibilities for 2021! The virus could not stop Christmas from coming and it can not stop us either. I am grateful for each of you and hope that we will continue to walk to-

gether in this journey we call life. Stay positive, stay well, and know that above all God loves you!

In Peace,  
Pastor Suzanne

### BLESSING OF SCARVES AND HATS



For the last seven years, Ingrid Bengston Eberle, former member of Messiah and daughter of Cliff Bengston, has made knitted scarves and hats for us to distribute locally to those in need. This year Pastor Jerry blessed 63 scarves and hats at the weekend service from the Light of Christ campus on December 26-27. Thank

you, Ingrid, for blessing others with the warmth of your knitted creations.



### SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The sun shone brightly on December 27<sup>th</sup> as we gathered on the sidewalk and lawn of Light of Christ Church to celebrate Christmas with our Sunday School. The children and youth told the story of Jesus' birth with songs, musical selections, readings, prayers, carols and costumes. Many people worked together to make this happen. We thank all who participated, all who helped and our parents who support their children in Christian love. All was to the Glory of God! Peace and love, Lynn Terry

### FROM THE MAILROOM

"ALL WHO HEARD IT WERE AMAZED AT WHAT THE SHEPHERDS TOLD THEM. BUT MARY TREASURED ALL THESE WORDS AND PONDERED THEM

IN HER HEART." - Luke 2: 18-19

Look in AWE to our Savior, born that holy night in Bethlehem. May we TREASURE the wondrous MIRACLE of Christ's birth and PONDER the HOPE Christ brings.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and the churchwide staff

Thank you for your generous gifts. Merry Christmas!

Robin Brown

ELCA Mission Funding

### LIGHT OF CHRIST OFFERING ENVELOPES

LoC offering envelopes are ready for pickup. If you would like your offering envelopes, you can pick them up on Monday, January 4 between 10:00 AM and noon in the new fellowship hall.

### THIS WEEK IN THE UPG JANUARY 2—JANUARY 10

#### Saturday January 2

4:45 PM Worship  
("LiveStream" Facebook from St. JW)

#### Sunday January 3

Worship available on YouTube  
10:30 AM 46ers Zoom

#### Monday January 4

7:00 PM Coffee & Conversation (Zoom)

#### Tuesday January 5

9:00 AM Staff Meeting (Zoom)

#### Wednesday January 6

7:00 AM Fellowship Meeting

#### Thursday January 7

6:30 PM Bible Study (Zoom)

#### Friday January 8

#### Saturday January 9

4:45 PM Worship  
("Livestream" Facebook)

#### Sunday January 10

Worship available on YouTube  
10:30 AM 46ers Zoom