

A Note from Your Pastor--

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken to the Prophet. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel." (Matthew 1:22-23)

Emmanuel

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in this Season of Advent/Christmas 2019. I am looking forward to the many blessings of this season including singing those Advent hymns and Christmas carols. A favorite Advent hymn is, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, and will serve as the Gathering Hymn on the First Sunday in Advent on December 1st. The name Emmanuel means, "God with us," and that is most important, for it seems that there are times during this season, especially at Christmas, when we can feel terribly lonely, and God very distant. Some churches will have a "Blue Christmas Service," to acknowledge the painful emotions of the season and serve to help people get through those difficult and hurtful places.

I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt as their first Christmas approached? They must have felt a "lonely exile" as they were struggling with the birth of their first child in the cattle stall of a small town, distant from home and families. Mary and Joseph were assured that even in their loneliness God's great promises were being fulfilled. God was with them! I would like to share this poem that comes from an anonymous author that expresses this hope.

*Not to Celebrate?
Not to celebrate? Your burden too great to bear?
Your loneliness too intensified during this Christmas Season?
Your tears have no end?
You should lead the celebration!
You should run through the street to ring the bells and shout the loudest!
You should fling the tinsel on the tree and open your house to neighbors and call them to dance!
For it is you above all others who know the joy of Advent.
It is unto you that a Savior is born this day, One who comes to lift your burdens from
your shoulders, One who comes to wipe the tears from your eyes.
You are not alone, for He is born this day, to you!*

In Jesus Christ, God is with us! No matter who may fail us or let us down, no matter how forsaken we may feel, no matter what your circumstances may be this season, God is with you! Believe that!

***"Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel,
shall come to thee, O Israel."***

I wish you and those you love a hopeful Advent, a joyful Christmas and a New Year filled with peace.

Peace and Prayers.

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow