

NOTE: Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols will be held at 3:00 p.m. on December 24 this year.

Dear Member or Friend of First Community Church,

Christmas comes at the coldest and darkest time of year. The days of winter are short and often gray. It is a time when (at least here in New England) the song of birds is notable for its absence, and the beautiful fall foliage has given way to trees that are stark and bare.

Christmas is God's answer to the problem of darkness! Christmas brings a message--and hopefully also an experience of warmth and light both to us and to our world!

The days seem cold and dark for many of us. It has been a difficult year for many. Over the past two years, we lost six members of our church family, several to the coronavirus. Several of us are struggling with intractable problems. Others feel the absence of a mother or father, a husband or wife, a brother or sister, perhaps even a child around the Christmas board. Just as with this time of year, the days we can share with those we love are much too short.

Christmas is God's answer to the problem of darkness! The message of Christmas is that God loves us! This love is so great that God became human in Jesus to live with us, to suffer as we suffer, and to teach us about the kingdom of heaven that lies within. Christmas is a sign of God's loving presence with us, within us, and with the world.

If we grasp the deep truth of this message, we will be able to love this life that God has given us, this difficult, demanding, confusing, and, at the same time, this precious and mysterious life. We will be able to lovingly affirm life with all its joys and sorrows. We will be able to feel God's loving presence throughout all the seasons of our lives.

In this Christmas season, I pray that through the indwelling Spirit of the risen Christ you will once again discover the true mystery and meaning of Christmas. I pray that you will once again number among the shepherds and the Magi, those who heard the angel voices, witnessed a transforming event, and were deeply touched by the magic and mystery of the birth. I pray that you will live the year to come in the light of the Christmas star, and that the light of this star will drive out the darkness that casts its shadow over us and over the world.

Be with us at our Christmas Eve afternoon service as we receive the light and then share it with each other. Then help us take this light and share it with a world that desperately needs it!

Christmas blessings!
Reverend Paul D. Sanderson