

A Weekly Letter

December, 27, 2019

Beloved Family in Christ,

The baby has arrived. The time of waiting has passed, and now we are busy in a different way, cleaning up and helping the world return to some semblance of order. Christmas, we know, has become loaded with meaning far beyond the original story. It is true: we should emphasize the “Christ” in Christmas, but I think that we should make that statement with a huge amount of compassion and love.

The shopping madness of the season has, of course, nothing to do with our sacred story. But it reflects a longing, a desire for something. We have been told: if we have this thing, or that thing, our lives will be better. We have been told: if you give this person or that person something precious, then they will love you.

We Christians have a completely different story to tell: there is nothing you can do to earn the love of God. You have that already. Nothing material you can give to anyone will express your love for them. So we invite all our beloved families and neighbours to step back from the huge pile of expectations. Let us love one another gently then.

Christmas at St. Barnabas was a wonderful affair. I’m so glad to have seen so many of you, and those who weren’t able to be there, know that we held you in our prayers.

On Christmas Eve we had two services: a wonderful, crazy pageant which told the story of the coming of Christmas to a small Italian town in the 14th century, where people had forgotten the meaning of this festive time. The story was aided by a pack of wild wolves who chased a poor woman around, and were then converted by St. Francis and St. Claire, and there was a grand procession

to witness the nativity scene. Thanks to Luz and Luis and baby Jazlyn for being our holy family (and John was a pretty good wolf too!) This first service we shared with our beloved friends from Shiloh-United. Our second Christmas Eve service was a beautiful glowing celebration of the power of love to overcome all hatred, despair and fear.

Christmas Day was the usual unmitigated mayhem! Chef Amber Anderson made turkey for 200 and we invited the whole neighbourhood. While Martha was busy overseeing the fabulous chaos, Chris was helping in the kitchen. Roland was essential too, while Bob and Chuck and Sathia took turns serenading the crowds. Thanks to the dozens of volunteers and donors who make Christmas Dinner happen! Wow!

This Sunday coming we will be marking the Feast Day of the Holy Innocents at our regular 10am service, and at 2pm we will gather with glorious singing leaders: Caitlin and Patti and I share in the Sacred Singing Circle. Singing can be a spiritual practice and all are invited to share in the song.

Finally NEXT weekend will be a special time, as we wrap up the Christmas Season. We have had to fiddle with the Family Movie night, due to conflicts in scheduling. I apologize for that, but please tell it over the hill and everywhere: Movie Night, January 4th, 6pm. We are showing The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe on Wayne's Wonderful Jumbotron. We'll have popcorn and snacks and drinks. Bring your friends. We will be having Holy Felters on January 4th as well, at 2pm - come one and all to stab many woolen things!

And SUNDAY, January 5th, we're inviting the whole town to CHURCH. Many people have many questions about faith and church. We are hosting a "teaching eucharist" where people can come with all of their questions, and we will have some explaining to do. Terry and gang will be preparing a vat of vegetarian chilli for after the service, so plan to come, and invite everyone you know!

That's it for this week. I pray that you are finding some time for rest and peace in these quiet days. The light is returning!

Love,

Emilie
