

Lights in the Darkness

As I reflect on the past month, I certainly experienced the seasons of Advent and Christmas as especially wonderful this year. We are so grateful for all the blessings that have been upon us. We are so thankful that Noah is here and healthy. We are so thankful for the time we have been given for parental leave. We are so thankful for Pr. Clark, the staff, and the volunteers through this time. We are so thankful for prayers, the cards, the gifts, and the meals we have been given. From the bottom of our hearts, *THANK YOU!* It was such a joyful lift and support to us during the Advent & Christmas seasons and we are so thankful for you all shining your God-given lights upon us.

From time to time, we all need a lift to experience the joy of the season especially when our lists seem endless and when the running around becomes tiresome, we need help to experience the joy, hope, and new life that we have all been longing for desperately. Sometimes, even the good news of this season can become commonplace as we look for peace in an increasingly unsafe world or when there seems to be an abundance of bad news. It seems like now, maybe more than most seasons, we all need to hear and experience the goodness of God made visible in Jesus Christ. We all need to experience the light shining in the darkness and the joy that brings to us.

As we move into the season of light (*Epiphany*), we are reminded that Jesus is our light shining in the darkness. Jesus shines forth hope, peace, joy, and love into dark places in us and in the world. We are reminded throughout Epiphany that His Light, is always there and always shining. Despite our best attempts to snuff it out, Jesus' light shines forth. Maybe it is sometimes hard to see, but it is there, shining forth like a star against the back drop of the darkness of space.

In Baptism, through the Holy Spirit, we are given this Light, which we are then called on to share wherever we find ourselves to be. Whether we are in school, or at work, on vacation, on leave, with family, with friends, or in retirement, even as we approach or lay at our death beds, we are called to shine forth the Light that God has given to us in Baptism. We are all inheritors of this Light, and called to share it no matter what, as Jesus has done first for us.

In shining our God-given lights, we reflect God's goodness and love, and shine forth a little hope into the world and a little joy, all of which helps us to see God in Jesus Christ at work in the world. Jesus has called us out of the darkness of sin, the darkness of brokenness, the darkness of guilt and shame. Jesus has called us out of darkness, and has sent us forth, to be mirrors of God's Light. May those who look upon us see the image of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

May our joyful celebrations of the Light which has found and claimed us continue as we move into 2020.

In Christ,
Pastor Matt Kamprath