



Beloved,

Christmas is almost here. This year, like last year, it won't be celebrated the way we hoped. We've planned, altered, pivoted, planned, and rebooked our travel so many times we've lost track. Can we even remember when 'change your booking' had fees? And yet...

As I woke this morning there was a beautiful bright northern sunrise. The air was crisp. The snow lay like a blanket across the landscape. Plumes rose from houses straight up. My coffee was hot and strong. The fireplace was warm and bright. The Christmas tree was twinkling. Our granddaughter was taking everything in through those big blue eyes. It was like the cover on a Christmas card, and I was reminded of words from The Grinch. Christmas will still come even with restrictions and Covid-19; even with cancelled parties and small in home gatherings; even with roads under repair and supply chains struggling; even with naught a turkey to be found; even with lockdowns and quarantines; and boosters half sized and full. Christmas. Still. Comes.

In the silence of the morning before the busyness of the day is begun on this Tibb's Eve, I am reminded of the gift that each of you are. Each of you is part of what makes TrinityUCPG an amazing community. In many ways we are family by choice, siblings in Christ. We're not perfect. We can frustrate and annoy one another. We cause each other to scratch our heads and wonder "why?" We make mistakes and challenge each other and yet...

There is no community I'd rather be with during our second pandemic Christmas. Your passion, creativity, faithfulness, discipleship, commitment, and so many kinds of support keep me going. Every time I'm tempted to refuse one – more – pivot, someone calls, emails, stops in and reminds me that Christmas still comes. They remind me of why our community is so resilient and how it can be so supportive. Each of you is part of making our community what it is. Each of you is why I'm able to meet the challenge of snowstorms and frantic recording. Each of you are a gift in my life. A precious reminder that Christmas still comes, no matter what is happening and together we share that Christmas light with one another and the world.

My church family, my friends, thank you for everything you do and the difference you make in people's lives. Thank you for the small things that remind people they are loved and not alone. Thank you for keeping the spark of faith alive all year through. Thank you for caring for one another, supporting one another, being present with one another. Thank you for baking, shoveling, cooking, singing, teaching, leading, preaching, watching, broadcasting, building, smiling, laughing, crying, reflecting, and praying. In other words, thank you for being you in all the wonder and glory of being created in the image of God.

May the retelling of the birth of Jesus bring you both comfort and joy this Christmas season. May it remind you of your worth as someone created in the image of God, regardless of what the world might say. May you have moments of joy and times of remembering. May you know that you are a light that shines in the shadows of life, and may you know that you are deeply appreciated.

With blessings this Christmas seasons,

Rev. Bob

