A Light in the Darkness

Isn’t it interesting that Christmas comes in the darkest time of year for us in this part of the world’s hemisphere? For other parts of the world this is the warmest and brightest time of year, which seems appropriate since the Apostle John talked about Jesus as ‘the light of all people.’ But John also went on to say, ‘The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.’(John 1:4b-5)

We, who live in this dark time of the year, need to remember that the light of Christ shines no matter the weather or circumstances. For it’s not just the weather and shortened days that can seem so dark. Sometimes our circumstances seem dark as well. Many are contending with losses that feel as if they live under dark clouds, in cold loneliness and endless streams of tears. Or their lives and their families’ lives are overwhelmed with physical disease or mental illness. These types of darkness can seem even darker than the dreariest, sunless day.

This whirlwind of Christmas, which I’m sure many of us are already in the midst of, as the non-stop activities creep into our schedules or the shopping to somehow get the perfect gift, may leave us feeling a little worn and weary. I hope we can take time to receive the Light of Christ. I invite us to think and pray about where does the Light of Christ want to shine a little brighter?

Yet, in the midst of the hustle and bustle maybe we can find quiet in the shadow of God’s wings. Psalm 36:7 helps us: ‘How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.’ Indeed it seems some darkness can be beneficial to us.

In the creation story in Genesis, when there was only darkness, God spoke light into the darkness and saw that the light was good, God separated the light from the darkness. Then God called the light day and the darkness night. There was evening and morning, the first day. (Gen. 1:1-5 NRS)

We need this darkness to sleep, rejuvenate and regenerate our bodies, minds and spirits. Just as we need the light to bring warmth, hope, and clarity to us as well. Both are needed to lead balanced lives in our waking and sleeping. The same is true in our over scheduled holiday season. When the lights seem too bright, the endless motion and merriment too crazy, slip away for some quiet moments in the presence of Jesus. He, who was and is Emmanuel, God-with-us, was born not in a bright shiny new house, but in the area where animals were housed, without much light and little fanfare. Although God *did* send angels to announce His Son’s birth. What a sight that must have been!

I pray that we will enjoy the brightness of the glory of God in this season as well as the quiet and reflective light of Christ in our hearts and homes as we take time to worship Him and find welcome in the shadow of God’s wings. For He who is the Light of the World, came quietly and completely into the darkness of the cross to take away the sins and deepest despair of hurts and death so we might live our lives abundantly, faithfully and fully alive in Him. Nothing else – not all the presents, Christmas lights, parties or endless Christmas TV shows or movies – can really give us lasting faith, hope, love and peace. Only Jesus can do that, And nothing – not even the darkest hour of our lives- can snuff out the light of His love. For Jesus said, ‘Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!’ (John 16:33KJV) Let us rejoice and give thanks!