



The Elim Scribe



Reflections from Pr Bruce ~

Christmas at Wintertime

A confession.... I don't enjoy winter. I accept it. I have learned to appreciate it. But I do not always enjoy it. I miss the sunshine and warm days of summer. I do appreciate the changing of seasons. Spring brings the refreshment of new growth and life. The warmth and sunshine of summer are good. Fall colors and the musty smell of fallen leaves are wonderful. But winter is cold, and sometimes lasts too long. Winter is not my favorite time of year.

I am grateful for the cycles of life that the changing seasons give. I am grateful for the cycles of life we humans share with creation. The four seasons renew us and keep us fresh. It is the cold winds of winter that help me appreciate the freshness of spring and warmth of summer!

For those of us who live in the northern hemisphere, winter brings us Christmas. And with winter we have Children's programs, Christmas Eve Candlelight services, family gatherings, parties, presents, trees, lights, music, plus meals, caroling, etc. All that makes winter good—something to look forward to. Winter sports are enjoyable too.

There is the downside. Our world is broken. Amidst the festivities, we can wrestle with loss, with loneliness. We want to be happy. We want to celebrate. Yet sometimes we cannot escape the sadness and gloom. Maybe that is why Christmas in winter is significant. It reminds us that the story is still being written. God is not finished with us or our world yet. Christmas reminds us that the light and warmth of God's love is more powerful than despair and the darkness that surrounds us. Christmas encourages feelings of love, kindness, generosity and caring for each other. Maybe that is why Charles Dickens wrote **Christmas Carol**. We still need the "milk of human kindness."

Celebrating Advent and Christmas at the darkest time of the year makes sense. When we grow weary of winter, we yearn for spring. That sense of longing, that leaning forward with hopeful expectation, befits the Advent theme. We celebrate Christ, the Light of the world, at the darkest time of year. "In Him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:4-5)

Announcements

- This year's Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (with carols and Holy Communion) will be celebrated at 7 p.m. There is no perfect time for everyone, but please join us if you can! If you cannot come in person, we hope to provide a live-stream on our facebook page. (<https://www.facebook.com/elimlutheran.church.3>)

- Deanna Lee will be organizing the assembly of holiday goodie baskets for our senior citizens. If you would like to donate treats, here is a list of suggested items. All treats should be store-purchased and individually wrapped. Possible items to donate: snack-size packets of cookies or crackers, wrapped candies, and fresh fruit, e.g., tangerines. We need enough for ten baskets. Volunteers will gather at the church at 11 a.m. on Dec 11th to prepare the baskets. Please join us if you can.
- We will go Christmas Caroling for home-bound members after worship on Sunday, December 12th. The hope is to carol outside for people listening from their porch. There are ten possible homes, but that is too many for our small group. Pr Bruce will whittle this down to a more realistic five at the most. Those that we don't visit will have their goodie baskets delivered to them.
- You are encouraged to donate a little extra to provide end-of-year bonuses for Diane, Nancy, and Pr Bruce. You can include that with your regular offering or send a check to Elim's office; be sure to add a notation that it is to be used for bonuses.
- If you would like to purchase a poinsettia for the Christmas Eve service, please include \$10.00 with your offering or send a separate payment to the office; you can take the plant home after the service.
- Elim will be pursuing a new holiday project this year, benefitting the Children's Justice Center (<https://www.cjcogden.org>.) This organization offers support for children who are caught up in situations involving the criminal justice system. It provides safe space and adult support while police investigations are continuing; it also provides each child with a new stuffed animal to keep them company during the process. We will collect new stuffed animals in a bin at the church through the holidays and see that they are delivered to the C.J.C. Thanks to Pam Deitsch for conceiving of and organizing this effort.
- We will have our regular Sunday service on December 26; be sure to join us in the Elim sanctuary at 10 a.m. As usual, the service will be streamed live on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/elimlutheran.church.3>)

