

REV. JIM'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Christmas 2017

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" - Luke 2:10-11



Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Loving God! It hardly seems possible Christmas is right around the corner! Let me share with you two questions I've been thinking about for the past few weeks as I've been praying about the joy of Advent and Christmas.

Question 1. ***"What is the one word that comes to mind for you when you think of Christmas?"***

Question 2. ***"Are you ready for Christmas?"***

So my friends, I invite you to sit down with a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate and read my answers. However, more importantly, I invite you to think about your answers to these two questions.

"What is the one word that comes to mind when you think of Christmas?" For me that one word is love. Luke's Gospel tells the Christmas story of the joyous news of the birth of our Savior Jesus. What a story of God's amazing gift of love to you, and me, and the entire world! John's Gospel tells us "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have everlasting life." What an amazing love story about God's love for us.

"Are you ready for Christmas?" So what does it mean to be ready for Christmas? I've finally figured out it isn't about buying presents. (Who can ever know what to buy and what size to buy?) I'm convinced it isn't about baking cookies. (Who can ever know what kind to make and how many to make?)

So, how about you... "Are you ready for Christmas?" Are you ready to receive God's gift of love as we celebrate the miraculous birth of a little baby who was born to save your life and my life? ***"Are you ready for Christmas?"*** Are you ready to enjoy the gifts of friends and family and food and laughter? Are you ready to give of yourself, your gifts, talents and resources throughout the coming year as you prepare for a New Year of Christian life and service? ***Are you ready for Christmas?"*** Are you ready to receive the gift of God's forgiveness and love each and every day of your life? Are you ready to offer forgiveness to others each and every day of your life?

Friends, my prayer for you is that you are truly ready to receive the joy of Christmas this year! Let's gather together throughout this Advent and Christmas season to receive the joy of Christmas! Let's allow the birth of the baby Jesus to create new life for each of us!

Love and Prayers,
+ Pastor Jim

P.S. *I hope to see you at our special Christmas Eve Worship Service*

Sunday, December 24 - 7:00 pm - Community Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Riceville UMC