



BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY,  
WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE.

LUKE 2:10

Joy  
TO THE  
World  
THE LORD  
IS COME!

December 9, 2024

I loved this Christmas paper when I spotted it on Concordia's website. The message of joy and the bright light shining in the darkness driving away fear and doubt just called to me.

This year has been a tumultuous one. It has left many people with feelings of deep anxiety and uncertainty. But we here in the Church are about to enter a season of light when the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus shines through the darkness of fear and doubt as Jesus is born to us once again.

The story of Jesus' birth begins and ends with the same message, "Fear not!" From Gabriel's announcement to Mary, to the angels' joyful tidings to the shepherds on the hillside, the message that we are not to be afraid is integral to the incarnational nature of our faith. It allows us to rejoice, even in the face of uncertainty because we know that God is with us and will continue to be with us through all of our worry and fear.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with the youth from Liberti Church at one of their meetings. One of the questions the young people asked me was whether or not I had a favorite Bible verse. While there are many that I love, the one that always draws me is from the fourth chapter of Philippians: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." I sometimes consider myself to be a bit of a lightweight when it comes to serious theological matters, but at this time of year, I think I'm going to hold my ground. Christmas offers us the opportunity to dwell in the pure, the lovely, the admirable, the excellent, and the praiseworthy. It is a season during which we can leave the gloom behind, and from which we can draw strength from that blessed assurance that Jesus is ours. It offers us the opportunity to reach out to others, especially those in need, or sorrow, or fear and share with them the light of Christ.

On the back of this letter is our full schedule of services for the Christmas season. Although we Episcopalians are not always the bravest evangelists, I would encourage you to think about the people in your life and consider inviting someone whose Christmas might be brightened by attending a service to join you. Let us try to share the light and the message of the season that we do not need to be afraid, Jesus is with us at Christmas and forever.

Hoping to see you during this joyous and wondrous season,

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa".

Theresa Hoyt-Chattin  
Verger