



Christmas 2020

Joy to the world, the Lord has come.

Are you feeling joyful yet?
(pause...)

What about now?

Christmas comes with beautiful lights, hot chocolate, candy canes, favorite carols, and gifts to share and receive...not to mention holiday cheer in the form of concerts, parties, reunions, and family gatherings. It's a season filled with warmth, joy, and happiness.

This year, of course, is different. Concerts are online, family gatherings are taking place over Zoom, and carols are being sung in front of a flat-screen TV. For many, this has been a dark and difficult holiday season. One might be tempted to channel our inner Grinch with a hearty "Bah humbug!" Christmas this year is too much work! Let's just forget the tree, the lights, the ribbons, and even the Christmas cookies. Let's skip it all until we can return to the life we know and love.

But this is a season about joy. And joy is different from happiness and cheer. The writer C.S. Lewis described joy as a signpost in the woods when one is lost. The signpost doesn't bring about joy, but simply points to deeper hope and light. We, as Christians, proclaim this truth even in the darkest of times. *Joy to the world, the Lord has come.*

In his inspiring Christmas message, Presiding Bishop Curry reminds us that we must shine light into the darkness and proclaim joy. He says:

"Like much in our lives, proclaiming joy is difficult work – also good and essential work – especially now. Though we mourn that which is lost in our lives, our families, and our communities – Joy to the world! While we strive to pull up the twisted and thorny vines of hatred and bigotry and anger – Joy to the world! Through streaming tears and gritted teeth – Joy to the world! – because God is breaking into our lives and into this world anew."

When you look at your box of abandoned tangled Christmas lights, remember that we need **more Christmas** this year, not less. The lights, the tree, the music, all point to a deeper joy about a story of love. How a child, born in a manger, brought light and love to all of the world.

*"Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing. Joy to the world."*

Merry Christmas

The Rev. Krista D. Fregoso