



WISHING YOU TIDINGS OF GREAT  
**comfort & joy**



*“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*

Christmas Greetings!

Twelve years ago, I went on a trip to Israel and was able to visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. It was early January, and the city was still decorated for Christmas, though nothing like how we decorate here in the US. There were no inflatables or Santa’s in sight. In the entrance to the church there that honors Christ’s birth, was a Christmas tree decorated with homemade butterfly ornaments. But these were no ordinary butterfly ornaments. They were made from broken pieces of glass that had been gathered after the last series of bombings in that warring region.

The broken pieces of glass were all different shades of brown and green and clear. The sharp edges had been smoothed and the irregularly shaped pieces then set into butterfly designs. The result was a Christmas tree covered in beautifully unique butterflies. Winter isn’t the season for butterflies. Christmas isn’t usually the time we associate with butterflies. But it is always the season to give thanks for how God can make all things new. This is good news of great joy for all people! It is both a comfort and a joy to know God has come to earth to bring light and hope to our weary world.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, said in her Christmas message this year, “Let’s be gentle with ourselves and each other this Advent and Christmas. Let’s not fret about imperfect lives and incomplete holiday preparations. We won’t ever get it completely right. That’s God’s work. It is the best gift exchange ever.” We live in a broken world, filled with imperfect attitudes and misdirected priorities. It is into this world that God enters into, and it is for this world that God’s gift was given not only in a manger, but on a cross.

This year, as we celebrate Emmanuel, God with us, may we see that we are never alone. May we find peace and wholeness and completeness, knowing that God has made all things new.

God’s Blessings,

Pastor Jenny Jackson

