



“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

1 Peter 2:9

Dear Friends,

May God be with you and may you know the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in this season of Advent and as we walk toward the celebration of the Christmas season.

This is the time of year when we remember and thank God for the gift of Jesus Christ. The great and eternal Word of God became flesh save us from sin, death, and the devil. We thank God for Jesus who saves us and brings us into the eternal life of God.

At this time of year generosity, charity, and love are on our hearts. Many of you will support the ministries and organizations that help care for people in our communities and in our world. Ministries such as our partners ALSM, Camp Sequanota, and Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State as we move toward the end of the year.

I write to ask you to remember a place that continually reaches out to your community, that shares the love and mercy of Jesus, and works to bring hope and comfort to this world: your congregation. Your congregation is a place where Christ Jesus has called you into community, and week after week Jesus is with you as you gather to worship and celebrate the meal that our Lord gave us.

As you enter into this time of year when you are supporting organizations and ministries that do good and worthwhile work, please remember your congregational home. Consider making an additional Advent or Christmas gift to the mission of your congregation. You could decide to increase your weekly offering \$10, \$25, or \$50 a week during Advent. Or, you could make a special Christmas gift to the congregation of \$100, \$250, or \$500. Any gift will go toward continuing the ministry and outreach of your congregation. These gifts are all about helping us to reach out together to share the love of Christ with the world around us.

May God continue to bless you in the seasons of Advent and Christmas. May you have safe travels. May you be comforted by the presence of our Lord Jesus and by those you love.

Happy Advent and may Christ’s blessings be with you,

+Bishop Michael Rhyne
Allegheny Synod, ELCA