



2018 Christmas Message *from* Bishop Patricia A. Davenport

Greetings, Beloved!

Luke's story of Jesus' birth is...ordinary. Matter of fact. There is no drama, no tableau, no large cast of characters. Just this. It came time for Mary to deliver, and "she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger..." (Luke 2:7).

Yet this simple event in a Bethlehem stable is God breaking into the ordinary. A choir of angels rend the veil between heaven and earth to announce the cosmic significance of Jesus' birth – not to priests at the temple or a king at the palace but to lowly, hard-working shepherds shivering with their flock. To average people in the midst of their routine. To those looked down upon by most of society. To people like us.

This child, the angels say, is for you! For the shepherds, for the nation, for you and for me. God's power breaks into the world for all God's people, whether praised or marginalized, whether born rich or poor, no matter their social standing, their gender or orientation, the color of their skin - or even the content of their character. ***For you!*** – radical words for our increasingly tribal and nationalistic world, bent on categorizing and excluding so-called "others."

It is good news, indeed, that Christ is born for everyone. Such good news that the shepherds could not help but share it. Beloved, that is our call, too. Having seen the child born for us, a Savior, may we share with our communities the song of the angels:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people!" (Luke 2:14)

Christmas Blessings,

Patricia A. Davenport

Bishop



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Christmas Blessings

from your Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Staff



*Our best wishes for a blessed celebration of Christ's birth
and new beginnings in 2019*

Bishop Patricia A. Davenport

*Bob Fisher, Cynta Outterbridge, Martin Schwab, Rev. Brad Burke,
Mercedes Lee, Yvonne Curtis, Rev. Sue Lang*