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Date: Thu, December 15, 2011 3:18:43 PM
Cc:
Subject: Pastor's Weekly Message

Can you smell the salt air?"

Growing up in Philadelphia , many of our family weekends were spent at a family friend's home in Wildwood NJ , on the Jersey Shore . On those weekends, we would pack the family car early on Saturday morning and head out to New Jersey . Driving along, with the windows all down in my father's 1955 Ford Fairlane (whoever heard of a car with air conditioning?), my brother and I would get increasingly excited as the trip went on. My father's patience with the question "Are we there yet?" was quite short, about ten minutes long, so we learned early on, never to bother him with the question. As we were getting closer to our destination, my mother would alert us that we were almost there by asking, "Can you smell the salt air?"

That was our cue that our journey was almost complete, that within an hour we would be splashing around in the waves of the Atlantic Ocean .

As our Advent journey is nearing its completion, it's time to see if we can "smell the salt air," or in this case, sense the coming anew of Jesus. Advent is the time of the journey, as we spend our time waiting, anticipating, hoping. The joy of anticipation, the fulfillment of our time of hope, an experience of the love of God will soon be ours to glory in anew.

Last Sunday, four of young people led us in lighting three of the Advent candles as Pastor Cindy reminded us of the important distinction between our experiences of temporal happiness and long lasting, deep seated joy.

This Sunday will be one of great joy, morning and afternoon.

At the 10 am service, we will all gather, children of every age, families of every type, as we celebrate as a church family. This Sunday, Al and Marilyn Newton will lead us in worship lighting all four candles in the Advent wreath. During this service, the musical leadership will be the Transformers (choir for children grades 1-5 under the leadership of Leanne Connolly), the Contemporary Choir, and the Carolers. This will be the world premiere for the Carolers, although they have been singing in our midst for many years. The Carolers consists of Patrick Connolly, Marissa Fujimoto, Ryan Fujimoto, and Christa Hockenberry.

During this service, we will learn of Christmas traditions, especially of chrismons as we decorate the Christmas trees in the Sanctuary.

At 4 pm, we will have our annual Christmas Concert as individual members of as well as the entire Senior Choir lead a spirited time of seasonal and sacred music. This is always a very spirited concert.

Sunday morning worship and our afternoon concert are a wonderful combination to celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent. We hope you will find your place in your favorite pew to experience and enjoy all this.

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Next Wednesday, December 21st, we will be having a Service of Light in the Sanctuary at 7 pm.

While this season is experienced by many as a season of joy and fellowship, sometimes the circumstances of life lead us to places where these are not the emotions we experience. For some, the joy of this season deepens the ache they may feel. And for those who have experienced great loss in recent years, especially losses of loved ones by death, these days and nights can be painful and worrisome times.

The Service of Light, held on the day with the shortest amount of daylight and the longest amount of nightfall, seeks to provide a worship opportunity that recognizes and respects these emotions as well as allowing for a worship experience that is built on all this. During this service, we will draw on the resources of Scripture, song and community in an effort to open ourselves to God's healing and transforming presence.

Our TPC student Joseph Tobin has organized this service and all are invited to attend.

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