



Greetings!

Advent is finally here! The church is being transformed as I write. The trees are up and the lights are sparking, and oddly enough, I find myself beginning to relax. The decorations have brought memories flooding back from Christmases past.

When I was little, my mom and I would spend the weekends baking dozens of cookies, and in between the batches of cookies baking, we would decorate our tree with ornaments we had collected over the years, retelling the stories of the vacation the ornament was from, or remembering the favorite teacher who helped me to make the tissue paper angels in 3rd grade, and then carefully placing ornaments at the very top of the tree that were bought shortly after I was born. As each ornament was unwrapped, the stories were retold and sometimes new details would be remembered or added.

On Christmas Eve, my family would go looking at lights, oohing and ahing our way through the city. When we returned home, I would wait for Santa to come and scurry off to bed when the weatherman on the 10 o'clock news said that Santa's sleigh had been spotted in the area. The next morning of course, I woke everyone up long before daybreak to open presents.

Years later, my brother and I developed our own tradition. At exactly midnight, we would curl up by the fire at my parent's house and I would read the Nativity story out loud for us. I would linger over the words and every detail. This story was better than any gift that would be received in a few hours. Those moments were filled with magic, mystery and a sense of peace. The Christ Child had been born under the most extraordinary circumstances and all seemed right with the world once again.

Over the course of the next five weeks, we will be creating memories of our own as we journey from darkness to light and follow the star to Bethlehem. The choir will be presenting pieces from their cantata each week during both worship services, we will listen to the children retell the Christmas story on Thursday, December 9th at 7 PM, and on Christmas Eve at 5 and 11 we will celebrate once again, the birth of the One who changed all of mankind.

It will be a magical, life changing journey, full of new memories and stories to tell. I hope you will join us. I look forward to seeing you in worship on Sunday.

*Michelle*