



December 11, 2019

RECEIVING CHRISTMAS

An annual challenge for me is to see Christmas clearly. It's not just that the days can be busy—snow to shovel and packages to mail and all that. The challenge is that Christmas is so familiar. The traditions of the season can feel more like rote habit than anything that we would call merry and bright. There are times when life feels too busy, or too difficult, to go on lighting Advent candles and preparing for Christmas.

I try to make room for God's Spirit in my life. But the good news of Christmas is not something that I can produce on my own. It is God who moves in my life to help me to receive the gift of Christmas anew.

The writer Brian Doyle described such a movement of God's Spirit that came to him during his struggle with the horribly tangled Christmas lights. This is from his collection *A Book of Uncommon Prayer*.

"I saw beneath the tinsel and the nog, the snarl of commerce and the ocean of misspent money; I saw the quiet pleasure of ritual, the actual no-kidding no-fooling urge to pause and think about other people and their joy. I saw the flash of peace and love under all the shrill selling and tinny theater; and I was thrilled and moved. And then I remembered too that the ostensible reason for it all was the Love being bold and brave enough to assume a form that would bleed and break and despair and die; and I was again moved, and abashed; and I finished untangling the epic knot of lights, shivering yet again with happiness that we were given such a sweet terrible knot of a world to untangle, as best we can, with bumbling love."

I'll see you in church.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister