

*“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy
which shall be for all people!”
--Luke 2:10*

*“When we keep our Christmas the whole year through,
we shall make this earth a very different place.” --
Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol*

December 29, 2014

Dear Family and Friends of OSLC,

It is still the Christmas season.

Christmas—it's the season we so dearly love, that we begin planning for its arrival the day after Halloween. And then we just as eagerly sweep it away. Why, it was just December 27 the News Tribune featured an article titled *“When to take down Christmas decorations”*.

Some years I'd like to clear out the tree the day after Christmas, and other years I'd love for the season to linger a little longer. But the Church keeps Christmas until the Feast of Epiphany on January 6, also called Three Kings Day. So, ready or not, January 6 is the day I'll be putting away my decorations.

It has been an eventful year in our congregation: new leadership members and office volunteers, new ministry groups, and a new commitment to a Youth/SS staff position. There have been building improvements and space-sharing movements and financial pressures along the way. We've welcomed new members from infants to adults; we've walked with each other past milestones of first-communion, confirmation, graduation and weddings; we continue to hold each others hands through illness, divorce, financial ruin, and family upheaval; and we've endured losses of too many beloved members, family and friends.

It is good to end such a year with a party to celebrate Christ's birth. But it is vital for our spiritual health that we continue to remind each other *daily* that God's will is for “peace on earth, goodwill toward all”. And it is essential for the life of our congregation and our community that we extend Christ's love *“the whole year through”*, to every baby, of every age, creed and country, that God has brought into this world.

My prayer is that the joy and peace of God-With-Us will sustain you the whole year through. And I look forward to another year of serving God, God's people and our community with you.

Blessings to you and yours,

Pastor Christine