

## Christmas is Coming

Here we are once again steeped in the season of Advent, the coming of Christmas. The word Christmas actual meaning is rite or mass of Christ. The religious ceremonial celebration of Christ. It has become a time for gifts, Santa Claus, parties, and cookies. It is meant to be a religious ceremony. The celebration of the birth of a Savior. The birth of the most holy one, Jesus Christ. This year will be different. There will be no gathering in Church on Christmas Eve. There will be no family gatherings until the virus weakens. The expectation is that this will be a hard winter. The number of cases is expected to climb, the death toll to mount. We will once again be asked to not gather, to not be with our families. Thanksgiving was hard, we, when there was a we, had often spent a holiday with just the two of us and this year I received phone calls, zoom calls, text messages and it was okay but I miss the touch, the hugs. I fixed a special meal, ate far too many cranberries, had my favorite ice cream for dessert, watched the virtual parade. Christmas Eve was always our time with family, and I will miss that most of all. Big dinner, church, open gifts. Our routines will be strange, but it will be okay. We can do this. It will be hard, but we must do what is necessary and look forward to a time when we can resume our normal lives when the virus is under control. I think my most favorite Christmas Eve was when, on our way home from Church, our children became very excited in the car and began saying 'There's the star.' Indeed, in the sky was the brightest star I had ever seen. I was so happy that they had focused on the star that night and had not even mentioned gifts and Santa and reindeer. They were excited about a star that had signaled the birth of a baby. A baby that would become their Savior, a baby that they would carry with them their whole lives. I pray that we will remember the reason for Christmas. The birth of the Christ child.

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone, snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long time ago. What can I give him poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet, what I can I give him: Give my heart.

Bleak Midwinter by Christina G. Rossetti

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Lord we thank you for this season of Advent. May we not become so busy with the preparations that we forget the reason. Lord, help us through this pandemic. Our country is in chaos, we are divided, help us to come together with a common purpose and remember who and whose we are. Be with our Pastor and his family, keep them safe and bless his ministry. Be with our leaders and staff, grant them your guidance and safety. Be with our families, may they feel your comfort. Be with those who are sick and those that grieve, bless them. Lord we thank you for our blessings, for the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the shelter of our homes. May we who have everything, remember those who have nothing. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson