



Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

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Bishop's Pastoral Letter Christmas 2022

My dear Friends,

Christmas is often called the "Season of Light." This is evident in our communities and neighbourhoods when we see bright lights decorating homes and lighting the Christmas Tree. This Season of Light typically comes at the darkest time of the year - the winter solstice.



It is the time when the sun is at its lowest point in the sky, resulting in the shortest days and longest nights of the year. For many cultures, the winter solstice marks the start of the winter season and is celebrated as a time of renewal and hope. It is also a time when the darkness is seen as a metaphor for the challenges and struggles that we may face in life, and the Light represents the potential for growth and overcoming those obstacles.

As we enter the Christmas season, we are reminded of the Light that entered into the world with the birth of Jesus. In a time of darkness and despair, Jesus' arrival brought hope and the promise of salvation.

In the Gospel of John, it is written that "in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:4-5).

In John 8:12, Jesus says, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the Light of life." This simple yet powerful statement reveals the true nature of Jesus and His role in our lives.

Just as the bright flame of a candle can chase away the darkness in a room, so too does the Light of Jesus chase away the darkness in our hearts. When we welcome Jesus into our lives, we are filled with his love and grace, and we can overcome the struggles and challenges we face because we no longer meet them alone.

But the Light of Jesus is not just for us as individuals. It is also for the world around us. As followers of Jesus, we are responsible for sharing this Light with others and help bring hope and healing to those in the darkness.

By shining a light, we expose the darkness in our society. We see the darkness of poverty and inequality. The darkness of exclusion and injustice. The darkness of prejudice and discrimination. Shining a light on these issues can bring awareness and understanding to them and be a first step towards addressing them. By acknowledging and understanding the darkness in our society, we can begin to work towards creating a brighter and more equitable future for all. This may involve advocating for policies and programs that address poverty and inequality, promoting inclusivity and fairness, and challenging prejudice and discrimination whenever and wherever it occurs. It is important for all of us to be active and engaged in this process and to work together to create a society that is fair and just for everyone.

One way we can do this is by showing love and compassion to those in need. This might mean reaching out to a neighbour who is struggling, volunteering at a local charity, or simply offering a kind word to someone who is feeling down. By doing these things, we are shining the Light of Jesus into the world and bringing hope to those in need.

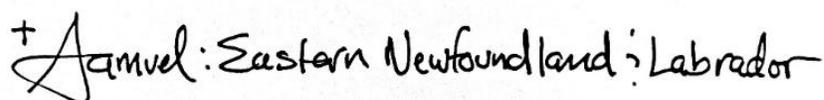
Another way we can share the Light of Jesus is by living our lives in a way that reflects his love and grace. This means treating others with kindness and respect, even when it is difficult to do so. It means being honest and faithful in all our relationships and living our lives in a way that brings glory to God.

There is no doubt that our world is currently facing many challenges and difficulties. From war, political instability, and economic uncertainty, to the ongoing climate crisis, and the pandemic, many issues are cause for concern. However, it is important to remember that humanity has faced and overcome adversity in the past, and we will do so again. By working together and supporting one another, we can find solutions to our problems and build a better future for all.

Jesus, the Light of the world, shines brightly in a world filled with darkness and despair. He is the source of hope and joy, offering us a path out of the darkness and into the Light. As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember the Light that came into the world with the birth of Jesus. Let us allow that Light to shine in our hearts and lives so that we can be a beacon of hope and Light to those around us. And let us continue to share the Light of Jesus with the world, knowing that it is through his Light that we will find true joy and fulfillment.

On behalf of my family – Jill, Amy, and Samuel – we wish you a blessed and "Light-filled" Christmas. May God bless you this Christmas season and always. Amen.

In Christ's Light and Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "† Samuel: Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

The Rt. Revd. Samuel V. Rose
Bishop - Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador