



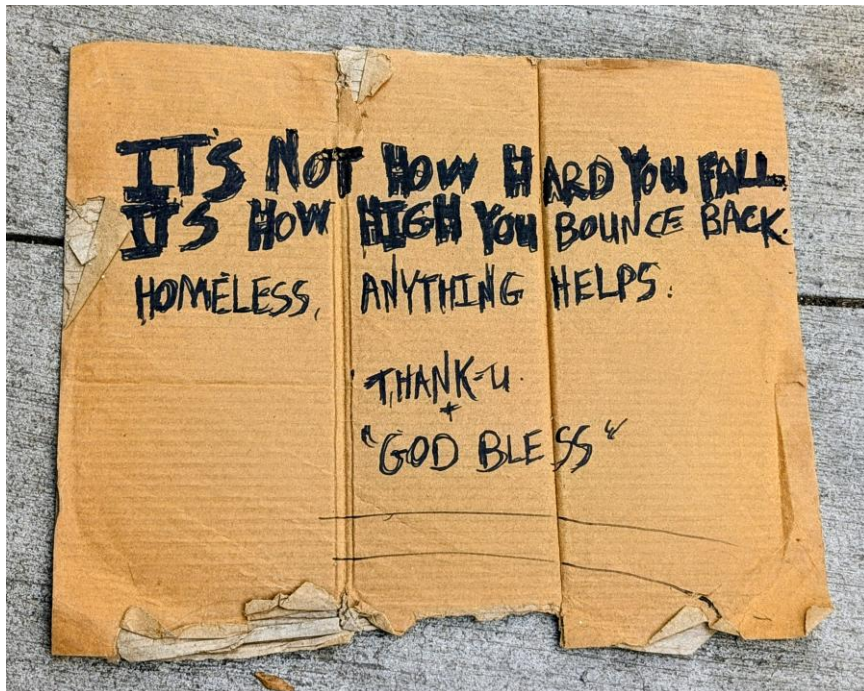
Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

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Bishop's Christmas Letter 2025 "Hope is Born"



Dear Friends in Christ,

I was walking through Toronto on a chilly November morning when I spotted this cardboard sign just lying there on the street. A few belongings were scattered around, but nobody was in sight. The words scribbled on it really stopped me in my tracks: **"It's not how hard you fall, it's how high you bounce back. Homeless, anything helps. Thank-U + God Bless."**

Standing on that cold, dirty sidewalk, it hit me that this was where someone was actually living. But even in

such a rough situation, their plea for help carried this spark of hope. Amid all the city noise, that sign got me reflecting on how hope can pop up in the toughest spots. This person, out there facing the streets, wasn't just asking for handouts; they were sharing a bit of wisdom about getting back up, and ending with a blessing. "How high you bounce back" speaks to a kind of quiet faith that things can improve, no matter the setback.

It made me think of the Christmas story, where hope didn't arrive in some fancy setup, but in a plain, difficult place.

Picture the Holy Family: Mary and Joseph, tired from travelling, looking for a place to stay but getting doors shut in their faces. They were essentially homeless, ending up in a stable with the animals. In that chilly Bethlehem spot, surrounded by hay and the usual barn smells, Jesus came into the world and was placed in a feeding trough for his first cradle. Yet, that's exactly where real Hope was born. The Child who would bring hope to everyone showed up among the overlooked and ignored, like those shepherds out in the fields.

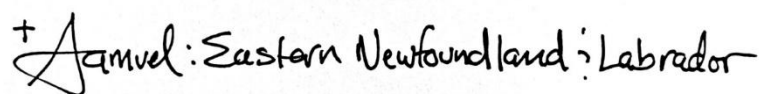
This Christmas, as we gather in our homes, churches, and communities across our Diocese, let's hold onto that image: the Holy Family sheltered in a stable, reminding us that God often is most present when life feels hardest. We know all about tough times, from the economic struggles and the cost of living to those personal battles with health issues, losing loved ones, or just feeling alone, especially through our long dark winters. Storms come at us, both the blizzards and the storms in our hearts, testing what we're made of and our faith. But like that sign talking about bouncing back, and how a simple stable became the cradle of new life, we're called to cling to hope as our solid foundation.

The Christmas miracle shows us God doesn't stand back from our troubles. God steps right into them, making something beautiful out of the mess. Jesus' birth tells us that no low point is beyond God's reach. Hope isn't fragile or just for the lucky. Hope is strong, grounded in the same power that turned a cross of suffering into a victory over death. As Paul in his Letter to the Romans says, we can even take heart in our hardships, because they build perseverance, then character, and out of that comes hope - and it won't disappoint us, with God's love poured into us by the Holy Spirit.

My dear friends, this Christmas season, let us do more than just feel this Hope. Let's pass it on. Reach out to those who are homeless or hurting in our midst – perhaps through our food banks, shelters, or simple acts of kindness, or simply being there for someone. Let's lift each other up in prayer and friendship, knowing that the Christ Child who came to a stable comes still to our hearts today. No matter what challenges are ahead, we can declare together: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

Wishing you and yours a warm and blessed Christmas, full of that unshakeable Hope from Emmanuel - God with us.

In Christmas Hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel: Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Rev. Samuel Rose
Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador