Dear friends,

Oh, the joy we shared on Sunday! The morning service of Lessons and Carols was a feast for the senses! The bright resonance of the hammered dulcimer welcomed us in. Members Sarah and Zack with their infant Archie lit the pink candle representing the everlasting joy we abide in as we await the day when all creation will flourish together. Esther bade us to remember the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the immigrant, the sick, and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and those who rejoice with us on another shore and in a greater light. John reminded us of the truest moment of the week, when we hear the assurance that God's grace is bigger than our sins, more inevitable than our mess-ups, and more permanent than our shortcomings. God's forgiveness is absolutely true. Thanks be to God.

With clear voices, Josie, Carlo, Izzy, and Noah told the story of salvation history, from the time of creation to "grace upon grace" that comes to us through Jesus, the true light of the world. In between the readings, we lifted our voices in song, or paused to listen as the choir, soloist, and instrumentalists brought the message of Advent peace and Christmas joy to life. The sights and sounds of the season filled the spirits of all who gathered.

In the evening, we experienced a different kind of joy as the children delighted us with their storytelling and with their animal, angel, and shepherd costumes. And Sarah, Zack and Archie made another appearance, this time as the Holy family! All of this was followed by a delicious potluck dinner and a sing-along that included bells, solos, twelve days of Christmas enacted with hand motions, Rudolph, and the rose e're blooming. Our children took lead roles, and an intergenerational good time was had by all!

Thanks so much to Kathy Parkins, our choir, musicians, speakers and all who attended the Lessons and Carols service to sing, pray, and celebrate together. Thanks to Lenore Champion, our teachers, parents, and children for making the pageant so memorable once again. And thanks to the Fellowship Committee and all who helped set up or clean up for our Christmas carol sing-a-long and potluck. It takes many people working together to create these celebrations of joy, peace, and love.

Advent blessings to you all, friends. What a gift it is to celebrate this season together.

With love,
Mindy