



*"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great **JOY** for all the people: to you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2: 10-11*

If you read through the stories of Jesus' birth in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, you find **JOY** springing forth everywhere! When the angel comes to Zechariah, the angel promises that **JOY** is on the way. (Luke 1: 14). As Mary enters the home of her cousin Elizabeth, the child, whom we know to be John the Baptizer, leaps for **JOY** within his mother's womb. (Luke 1: 44). The angels proclaim **JOY** to the world at Jesus' birth (Luke 2: 10), and the three wise men are overwhelmed with **JOY** when the star alights over the place where Jesus is born (Matthew 2:10). The coming of Christ brings **JOY**!

Sadly, many places in our community and world are void of true joy. The burdens of literal and virtual imprisonment, material and spiritual poverty, as well as deep despair and isolation weigh heavily on our society, especially in the wake of COVID.

But we are not without hope! The gifts that we give to a variety of missions and ministries through the Christmas Market at Lake Highlands United Methodist Church gives us the opportunity to shine the light of Jesus Christ in the midst of the darkness. **We are bearers of JOY, and his name is Jesus!**

In Christ,

Reverend Jill Jackson-Sears