



# The Chatham United Methodist Church

February, 2020

Dear Friends,

I recently read a poem by Neil Gaiman, who is an author and ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He wrote the following from a question he posed to thousands of people worldwide: What keeps you warm? His hope was to create advocacy and support for refugees. As we read his reflections, I wonder, what keeps you warm? What keeps us warm at the Chatham UMC? In part, your ongoing generosity, and God's grace, help keep the heat on, the lights on, the welcome warm, our hearts warm, the message of God's love for all people and all of creation, warm. Thank you. With warmth and gratitude, Jeff

## *What You Need to be Warm by Neil Gaiman*

*A baked potato of a winter's night to wrap your hands around or burn your mouth.  
A blanket knitted by your mother's cunning fingers. Or your grandmother's.  
A smile, a touch, trust, as you walk in from the snow  
or return to it, the tips of your ears pricked pink and frozen.*

*The tink tink tink of iron radiators waking in an old house.  
To surface from dreams in a bed, burrowed beneath blankets and comforters,  
the change of state from cold to warm is all that matters, and you think  
just one more minute snuggled here before you face the chill. Just one.*

*Places we slept as children: they warm us in the memory.  
We travel to an inside from the outside. To the orange flames of the fireplace  
or the wood burning in the stove. Breath-ice on the inside of windows,  
to be scratched off with a fingernail, melted with a whole hand.*

*Frost on the ground that stays in the shadows, waiting for us.  
Wear a scarf. Wear a coat. Wear a sweater. Wear socks. Wear thick gloves.  
An infant as she sleeps between us. A tumble of dogs,  
a kindle of cats and kittens. Come inside. You're safe now.*

*A kettle boiling at the stove. Your family or friends are there. They smile.  
Cocoa or chocolate, tea or coffee, soup or toddy, what you know you need.  
A heat exchange, they give it to you, you take the mug  
and start to thaw. While outside, for some of us, the journey began*

*as we walked away from our grandparents' houses  
away from the places we knew as children: changes of state and state and state,  
to stumble across a stony desert, or to brave the deep waters,  
while food and friends, home, a bed, even a blanket become just memories.*

*Sometimes it only takes a stranger, in a dark place,  
to hold out a badly knitted scarf, to offer a kind word, to say  
we have the right to be here, to make us warm in the coldest season.*

*You have the right to be here.*