

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



The United Church of Christ



DECEMBER 2011

FROM THE PASTOR



Merry Christmas

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Friends in Christ:

December is here. With a sense of quickness or slowness, we move toward Christmas, and the good news of great joy for all people that we hear at Christmas carries us far beyond that day.

As our Scientists in Congregations initiative moves forward, I find inspiration in the words of the Anglican priest and physicist, John Polkinghorne:

Science cannot tell us the whole story, for it does not know about the everlasting faithfulness of God. In that steadfast love of the creator for creatures lies the only possible ground for the hope of a destiny beyond death, either for ourselves...or for the universe. We shall die, and the cosmos will die, but the final word does not lie with death but with God....This does not mean that death is not real, but it does mean that it is not the ultimate reality. Only God is ultimate, and that is a sufficient basis to enable us to embrace the Advent hope.

Because we matter to God now, we say with faith that we matter to God eternally. Because we live in God's love now, we say with faith that we will live in God's love eternally.

As Christmas approaches, we need to get out and buy the presents. We need to bake the cookies, to give food, and do all the other small and large things that we do to celebrate the reality that God has come to us in human flesh, to mark the occasion of God with us in this world of colored lights that don't work and ovens that aren't heating quite right; God with us in this world of a shortage of peace and good will.

December is here. The year rolls to its conclusion—as do our lives, our world, our universe. All things roll not only toward their conclusion, but also toward their fulfillment. And that fulfillment is God, who was in the beginning and ever shall be.

Peace, *Bill*