

Saturday, December 23

## Christ Has Come

*LORD our God. ... There is good news for the city of Zion. Shout it as loud as you can from the highest mountain. Don't be afraid to shout to the towns of Judah, "Your God is here!"*                      Isaiah 40:3, 9 (CEV)

On the evening before I was going to prepare this devotion, I was called by my lay minister in Ulukhaktok. A long-time lay leader and community elder had passed away. All previous thoughts flew from my mind as I considered him and, equally, his family.

The skies, in my mind, began to turn grey. And yet, reflecting on this man's life and ministry, I was reminded of "the hope to which [God] has called" us all and "the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints." This after all is the reason for Christ's coming, to pronounce God's mercy, forgiveness and his Love, available to all who would call upon his name. Christ has come, as Emmanuel, God-with-us, to bring us comfort and encouragement in our times of need and stress, to be for us the Word of God for us in all of life's situations.

My friend, the elder, spent a great many years of his life living out that love and encouragement towards the people of his community and towards the clergy who were sent to them. He shared their lives, he protected them when necessary, provided for them as he could; he took to heart the words of Isaiah 40, which speak of the Christ. May this season of hope be one where we live the message of the prophet Isaiah: Encourage my people! Give them comfort. ... Clear a path in the desert!

**Holy God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Glorious Father: I pray that you would give to all the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, so that they may know you better. I pray also that the eyes of their hearts may be enlightened in order that they may know the hope to which you have called them, the riches of your glorious inheritance in the saints and your incomparably great power for us who believe. Amen.**  
(Eph. 1:17-19, modified)

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