

# The Journey to Christmas...

*Christmas is coming!* As our journey to Christmas begins once again, we eagerly prepare our

homes in anticipation. There are loved ones to see, gifts to give, and baking to do. Even more important than these preparations is the journey of our heart as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus, God's perfect gift, the fulfillment of God's loving promise. May hope, peace, joy, and love be the focus for you, your family, and friends as you prepare for this day, as we at the Lutheran Home Communities also turn our hearts and thoughts to the celebration of the Christ Child.

*May you be blessed with Hope.* Hope reminds us of the many believers throughout

the Old Testament and of God's promise to send the Messiah to save His people. Hope is something that is difficult for many of us. We deal with the daily struggles of life, health issues, the death of a loved one, or loss of independence. We have a difficult time focusing on things beyond our current situation, yet God never leaves us. Often times it is because of these trials that we are drawn ever closer to God. *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15:13

*May you find Peace* during the busy, fast-paced Christmas season. Waiting is hard in today's

society. We want the stoplight to change quickly, the shopping line to move along, and Christmas morning to arrive sooner rather than later. We forget that before good things happen, preparations must be made. With so many things to do, help us to slow down and take in all of the Christmas beauty. *Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."* John 14:27

*Shout for Joy, Jesus is coming!* Joy is a word we see and hear everywhere at

Christmas. "Joy to the World" is the message of the season. Too often, we associate joy with something big, a wedding or a birthday party. But joy can be felt in a hug or the squeeze of a hand, we can see joy in a smile or hear it in a voice, simple joys are found often in our daily lives. Open your eyes to the joy that surrounds us. *"My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also, which you have redeemed."* Psalm 71:23

*Love. What is the Christmas message?* God gave us the gift of love on

Christmas Day. Christmas has, and always will be, an astonishing, mysterious miracle—the wonderful story of the birth of our Savior in simple, unquestioning faith. Jesus came to the manger for the forgiveness of our sins. Because He died and rose again, we have new hope and a new life in Heaven. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16

As we journey toward Christmas, when we think of the shepherds, may we remember to be humble. When we think of wise men, may we remember to be generous. When we see the stars, may we remember the Light of Christ. When we see the Christ Child in the manger, may we remember to love unconditionally with kindness and compassion. May we open the doors of our hearts and reach out to those around us in kindness. Our hope is that during your Christmas journey you will remember our Lutheran Home Communities, its residents, tenants, and patients.

May you and your families be blessed with hope, peace, joy and love this Christmas and always.

*Diane Gloede, COO*

