

## From the Bishop

*When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. Galatians 4:4*

Merry Christmas to the friends and members of the Pacific Synod. We celebrate with all of Christendom the birth of the Savior, who was sent, Paul's letter to the Galatians reminds us, in the fullness of time. God's people had waited a long time for the Messiah to be born. They had waited through warfare, exile, persecution, foreign occupation, and many other hardships. But in the fullness of time, the Father sent the Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to save God's people. The Son was sent so that God's people might know that that God had not forgotten them in their hardship. God sent the Son to be with God's people, and the last words of the Son as spoken in the book of Matthew are a reminder that we are never alone: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

We have had hardships of our own this year. The pandemic has disrupted our lives, and the lives of our congregations. We have learned how to use technology to worship, have supported health care and other front-line workers, have made difficult decisions about when we could—and could not—be with those we love, and have prayed that God would sustain us until we are safe from the virus. The good news of Christmas is that we are never alone. God the Son was born to be with us. The one who was born on that first Christmas, who grew up to share God's love with us, who died for us and rose from the dead for us, who comes to us each and every day, helps us no matter what hardships we face. Jesus is also with us to help us, even in the midst of a pandemic, to remember the blessings and joys in our lives. We give thanks for all God has given us—our families, our friends, our neighbors, our talents and abilities, this planet on which we live—all are gifts of our gracious God. But no gift is more important than the gift of God's self, incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, born for us.

God bless you, good people of the Pacifica Synod. God sustain you through this very different Christmas. And remember, you are not alone. God is with you, now and always.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Bishop Andy Taylor/he, him, his  
Pacifica Synod of the ELCA

*Together in Christ we equip, accompany, and serve boldly  
so all may experience God's boundless grace.  
Together in Christ we are Pacifica Synod.*