This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 0:56:09 2026 / +0000 GMT

Christian Perspectives: Love, love, love

It's that time of year again. Christmas. And whether you are part of the Christian tradition or not, you will be swept up in its effervescence, as much fueled by economics and politics as anything remotely having to do with the birth of a baby over 2000 years ago. The school holidays are built around the tradition of Christmas in Canada. It is, whether some like it or not, part of the history of our country as a Christian nation. This may be changing, but still, the Christmas season has left an indelible mark upon our culture. And so, here we find ourselves, in the season where advertisers, television and film implore us to be happy, to spend money, and to celebrate. This is not always a welcome, or terribly intelligent or nuanced message. And in our current culture of push and shove, we might well wonder if peace on earth is but a fool's dream. And as goodwill for anyone seems in short supply, may appear as yet another failed promise.

Someone once remarked to me, that Christmas for ministers must be like the Super Bowl ? the big event around which much energy, money and time is spent, and supposedly, the minister as quarterback, garners much attention, and perhaps, hopefully, praise. Nothing, in my experience of being a minster could be farther from the truth.

Yes, it is true that time is spent in putting together extra services for the season. There are choir rehearsals, the hanging of the greens in the sanctuary, and various gatherings around shortbread to be anticipated. But too, there is a heaviness of heart as tensions arise in many families over money and household dynamics. Held up to the air brushed perfection of families on screen and in magazine, our own homes may seem tarnished, diminished in some unknown way. Some families may be gathered around a dying parent, or still grieving from a loss of a beloved one this last year. Christmas time seems to shine a light on our domestic situations, exposing our perceived inadequacies and anxieties, or our very real life and death struggles.

And that is a great source of sadness to minsters, and to all people who to think deeply about the heart of humanity, which, in truth, beats as a collective.

So, here, for what it is worth, is what I think the Christian Christmas story informs us all about our own families.

They are perfect exactly as they are at this very moment. Yes, with their complications. Yes, with their muddle. Yes, with their sorrows and upsets and yes, even with their anger and distress. They are perfect when we can align our sight through a different lens and see their loveliness and beauty in the midst of their disorder. The family of the Christmas story, after all, was quite a muddle. A single mother carrying a child of unknown parentage. A confused fiancé trying to do the right thing. No money. No roof over their heads. No one there to help or care for them but some barn animals. No future, or so it would seem.

And yet, and yet, as the story is told, it was love that redeemed everything. A mother's love for a child in the face of adversity. A man's love for a woman in the midst of the frightening unknown. The company and sweetness of God's wonderful, humble creatures who know nothing of ambition or avarice. And then, and then, the wonder of a sky lite with glory, with chorus, with blessings, for all people everywhere ? a harmony of goodness and joy and hope sprinkled like fairy dust on everything and everyone.

This is the power of love in the midst of adversity, this is the power of choosing to love when all around us would advise us of its foolishness. This is the heart of the Christmas story. It is the choosing to love, to be love, to grant love, right in the midst of our trials. The power it unleashes is unpresented. And it covers everyone in its miracle.

May your Christmas season this year be blessed with a richness of new understandings and a deep and abiding gratitude for all that you are, all that you have, in birthright and possibility.

And may you know yourself to be Beloved. For this is the true nature of humanity.

Rev. Candice Bist

Shelburne & Primrose United Church