Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

 It has been an interesting time to say the least. The weather outside was frightful. And since my furnace went out, and then the power went off, I cannot enjoy the next line, but the fire inside is delightful. And please don’t let it snow.

 What happens when your rituals are taken away from you? It broke my heart to cancel Christmas services. When the youth rehearsed, they were excited. Exams were done and they were ready to celebrate. I gave them a hint of what I had planned. A couple of the Braun and Koenig men (including Quinn) had made a manger for me. Marcy Braun found a baby and wrapped it in swaddling clothes for me. I found a blue veil in the Sunday School Christmas program costumes. I was going to portray Mary talking to Jesus; the message was entitled “I Wonder.” The youth thought it sounded neat. Randy had all the mikes ready and Maguire was ready to sing “Behold.” Marilyn and Ronnie had set up for communion. We were ready to go; and then we got artic weather. We knew it was coming, but hoped against hope all would be well. I was looking forward to the candle lighting; thinking about how this would be my last Christmas Eve with you. I was feeling heartbroken.

 What happens when your rituals are taken away from you. I hope most of you got to be with family or friends. I spent Christmas alone. When I lived in Pennsylvania there were many winters, I knew I would not make it home, I was prepared for it. But I was not prepared for it this year. So, no church and no family, no worship and no celebration. However, I am very thankful Mr. Schnipple could fix my furnace, after the power came back on. Many a folk spend the holidays working, God bless them everyone. And God bless Mel Metz for getting in his big truck and bringing me a hot cup of coffee. We sat in his truck for a while. It felt like heaven on earth!

 So, in spite of the usual rituals, I experienced the kindness of friends and the expertise of a furnace repairman. And a call from a dear friend who lives in Jasper Indiana. Wonderful simple acts of kindness, a very beautiful ritual indeed.

 There is a quote I dearly love. I may have read it in a Brene Brown book. “A friend is a person who knows your song and when you can’t sing it, sings it for you, sings you back to life.” Now that’s a beautiful ritual.

 God bless you all and give you a peace the passes all understanding in the New Year.

*Pastor Charla*