



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF LIBERIA

(Member of the Anglican Church of the Province of West Africa)

Office of the Diocesan Bishop

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BISHOP'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2022

December 23, 2022

To all Clergy, Episcopalians and Friends:

We bless God for another Season of Christmas. Many in Liberia and around the world find it difficult to celebrate it. The year 2022 has been a year of pain and sufferings of different kinds: bereavement, loss of jobs and other good things in their lives, experience of physical violence: domestic, sexual, racism, tribalism, ethnic, natural disasters, wars, rejection, and oppression of all sorts. These painful and unpleasant experiences have been perpetuated by individuals, groups and nations. Through it all, as Christians, we can say with the Psalmist, "Truly, the Lord is good to Israel" (Psalm 72:1). In spite of these challenges and painful experiences, we say the Lord has been good to us. He has preserved our lives up to current for a purpose.

Christmas is a reminder of God's love for the human race. It is a reminder about God's greatest gift, the gift of His very best, His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. He came to and continues to offer Himself as the Solution to the human condition of sin and its devastating effects on all mankind. He came to demonstrate God's love, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "For this is how God revealed his love, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8); "All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

God's love for us and in our hearts makes us able to endure all things and makes us able to conquer all manners and situations of life. Jesus Christ has come to show and teach us to receive God's love, live it and share it around. Jesus is the greatest of gifts. A gift can either be received or enjoyed (appreciated) or rejected or received but not used at all (unappreciated).

Let us accept Jesus in our hearts as Savior and Lord of our lives. We need to invite him by admitting our sins and wrongdoings, pleading for forgiveness, and determining to follow him by obeying what he commands. Jesus does not offer us a problem free life but power and grace to live and overcome challenges. The Holy Spirit that he gives each of his followers is greater than any human effort and any human promise of happiness. He makes in us the life of the Spirit possible. He provides wisdom, guidance, peace, and the power to forgive and serve others in spite of who they are and what they do to us.

It is my prayer that during this Christmas you will accept God's best gift of His son and thereby discover the art of giving and serving others as means of pleasing him and experiencing his power, love, joy, peace, patience, and freedom for every need and opportunity.

Merry Christmas and a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led New Year, 2023 from Korlah, the children and me.

Sincerely yours,

Rt. Rev. Dr. James B. Sellee, Bishop, Episcopal Church of Liberia