

Christmas Eve Meditation – We Need a Little Christmas
Saturday, December 24, 2022
Blythe Denham Kieffer, D.Min.
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Springfield, Illinois

The title of the meditation: We Need a Little Christmas

Let us pray. Holy and loving God, as we reflect together on the meaning of Christmas, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of each of our hearts be acceptable in your sight. Amen.

One of the annual rituals in the Kieffer Home is playing “We Need a little Christmas’ from the Broadway musical *Mame* as we put up our Christmas tree. The tradition began in 2005 after we saw *Mame* for the first time at the St. Louis Muny when Paul was 10 years old, the same age as Patrick Dennis after he came to live with his flamboyant, fun-loving, and fabulous Aunt Mame following the unexpected death of his parents. The musical is set in New York City and is a series of adventures which span the Great Depression and World War II. Full of hope and life, Mame sings “We Need a Little Christmas” after receiving news of the stock market crash and the loss of her fortune.

Dale plays tune.

“For we need a little Christmas, right this very minute, Candles in the window, carols at the spinet, Yes, we need a little Christmas, right this very minute, need a little Christmas now.”

Tonight, each of us has journeyed to this place to be with friends and family. In the paths of our individual lives, we have followed the star to Westminster...and we are each in need of a little Christmas.

Some of us are expectant and hopeful. Others of us, are longing for comfort. For many of us, this is a familiar journey as we have gathered on Christmas Eve with this family of faith for more years that we can remember. Others of us have been away, the paths of our lives have taken us to different places on new adventures. For us, this is a homecoming and there is a sense of nostalgia as we return to a familiar place with memories to ponder. Still others of us may be sharing our first Christmas Eve here at Westminster...finding ourselves in a new community with all the anticipations of where our life’s journey will take us in the New Year and creating memories to celebrate in the years to come.

Whatever the circumstance; we are together on this Holy night because we need a little Christmas. We have come to affirm together that the One who created us, who formed our inward parts and knit us together in our mother’s womb, chose to join us in our humanity as Mary’s child.

Together we proclaim in astonishment how it could be that the Creator of the ends of the earth, whose understanding is unsearchable and who renews the strength of those who wait, would come to us in the vulnerability of a child, teach us what it means to be truly human, and then conquer death by dying on a cross.

Perhaps more than anything else, in a changing and unpredictable world that is not always kind or fair, we celebrate the constancy and dependability of our steadfast, loving and faithful God. So, we gather tonight with a sense of awe and wonder to hear the familiar, ancient words in the story of our Savior's birth, read by our high school seniors in this meaningful Westminster tradition.

Let us be careful, my friends, not to over-romanticize the birth of Christ. When we do this, our temptation is to deny his humanity and God's willingness to join us in ours. Then when our own lives become difficult and unromantic, we forget we have a God who understands our circumstances. We forget we have a God who, by way of a manger, entered the cold and lonely places in our world to be there with us. We forget we have a God who comforts and upholds us when we feel most alone and abandoned, a God who hears our laments and answers our prayers.

Like Mame, through the years many of us have "grown a little leaner, grown a little colder, grown a little sadder, grown a little older, and we need a little angel sitting on our shoulders. Yes, we need a little Christmas now."

Like Mame, "we need a little music, need a little laughter, and need a little singing ringing through the rafter. Yes, we need a little Christmas now."

On this cold, silent, and Holy Night, may we recognize Emmanuel, God with us, and give thanks for the Christmas we need and have received in the gift of the Christ Child. Amen.