

CHRISTMAS MOMENTS
Author: Rev. Susan Bennett
Date: January 4, 2014

Hard to believe, but this last Christmas Eve I heard a TV news announcer say, “Well, now that the Christmas celebration is winding down ...” Winding down? It wasn’t even Christmas Day yet.

But as I thought about it, I realized that for the world, the holiday was almost over. Once the presents were opened and Christmas dinner cooked and eaten, that was about it till next year.

Christians can do better, can’t we? I really don’t want to forget the hope and joy of Jesus’ birth. Actually some of my favorite Christmas (or anytime) verses are in John 1:

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

What has come into being with him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

So for me, a true Christmas moment can happen anytime the light keeps shining even though the darkness seems dark. Years ago I served a large church in Midtown and was driving home after the last Christmas Eve service – it was late and dark, and my way home led me past a sort of camp of homeless folks beneath an overpass. It was dismal: dark, filled with trash and people and stuff; I couldn’t even imagine how hard it must be to live like that. But there, at the edge of the camp, someone had made a clearing and placed a small pink metal Christmas tree in it. It was bright, shiny pink and somebody had scrounged a few silver decorations and believe it or not, the old thing was kind of pretty and looked like it was under a spotlight. And I thought of John 1: *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

One of my dear church members had surgery for lung cancer several weeks ago. They got it all and no follow-up treatment was needed. She told us she felt very aware, from the moment of her diagnosis, that the light was within her and the darkness would never overcome it. And it did not. In fact, the light chased all the darkness away.

No one has to tell you that the world can be a very dark place – in our individual lives, in our communities, everywhere. Sometimes these Christmas moments – the times when we remember that the light shines on and always will – can comfort and strengthen us if we allow them to. Somehow, somewhere, in every situation, the light is shining. Remember that, search for it – and it will fill you with its warmth and hope.