



Raquette Lake Chapel

Raquette Lake, New York USA
www.raquettelakechapel.org

4Q2023 Pastoral Letter - Winter

The 4th Week of Advent

This year the 4th Sunday of Advent comes on Christmas Eve, much earlier than in most years, with Christmas Day the very next day. To avoid giving short shrift to the Advent season, here are some words to ponder:



We light the fourth candle, the Peace candle during the last week of Advent. We read in Mary's famous poem, "The Magnificat" (Luke 1:46-56) how the Messiah will bring peace and justice to the world. We see in this scripture a foretelling of Jesus' teaching about the love and concern God has for those on the margins of society: "He has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant." (Luke 1:48)

God's gift of Jesus brings great joy to everyone who receives him. The purpose of Christmas is to share this gift so the whole world will know the love of our Savior.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.

The government will rest on his shoulders.

*And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
(Isaiah 9:6)*

Merry Christmas!

A Christmas Message from Ancient Times

What I expected to say in a Christmas Message did not come about. A surprise came my way: an ancient manuscript has recently been discovered—a letter written by a "wise man" of the East. This letter describes a journey to witness the birth of the Messiah. Here is that message from the ancient past:



Beloved Future Children of the Light,

May this sacred missive traverse the corridors of time and find a haven in the hearts of those who, in ages yet to unfold, stand as faithful stewards of the eternal light. With reverence and awe, I, a humble Magus from the distant East, share the profound revelations we encountered during our sacred pilgrimage to witness the arrival of the Promised One in Bethlehem.

In the humility of the stable, we discerned an ageless truth: the Messiah, the Promised One, arrived not in the halls of earthly power but in the mantle of humility. Instead of a conquering hero, a warrior king in armor, the Promised One came to us as a vulnerable child, challenging what the people of Israel anticipated as a Messiah.

This letter bears witness that the Messiah did not conform to the majesty of earthly kingdoms. And the revelation of our journey is an invitation to a deeper understanding of God's ways, an understanding that surpasses the limitations of mortal comprehension. In the humility of the stable, my future friends in the faith, discover the essence of the Messiah's message—a message of love, mercy, and divine purpose that, in its unexpected form, surpassed the expectations of the children of Abraham.

May these words resonate with you across the ages of time, In Everlasting Faith,

A Magus of the East [name unintelligible]

[Vance's note: in case you wondered, this is a fictional letter – it is not authentic!]