

December 15, 2015



Dear Barbara & Vince,

**What a gift each of you are to our church, to the community, and to me.**

I say this even as I write these words with a heavy heart – a day when there has been another mass shooting. Yet Jesus' birth reminds us that hope is still possible, that the light shines in the darkness, and that the darkness will never overcome it. I offer these beautiful words by Thomas Troeger as my fervent prayer for each of you this Christmas.

*View the present through the promise, Christ will come again.  
Trust despite the deepening darkness, Christ will come again.  
Lift the world above its grieving through your watching and believing  
in the hope past hope's conceiving; Christ will come again.*

**Christ has indeed come again and His presence is alive and growing at Stayton United Methodist Church!**

**What a gift each of you are to our church, to the community, and to me.**

**Your generosity continues to witness to your faithfulness to Christ's call as you pour out your love through all that you do** – from the bazaar and spaghetti dinner to the Angel Tree gifts. From tutoring ESL, GED and Citizenship Classes to the laughter and camaraderie shared during game night.

Whether you provide hospitality through food and fellowship, or in your work with the children, **your love makes a significant difference in people's lives as you embody the good news of the Gospel each and every week.**

As a new comer in your midst, I have been touched by each life story shared in the meet and greet groups or around the table after worship. What is clear to everyone is that whether at a trustees meeting or the kitchen team, church council or choir practice, **your love for one another shines through and communicates welcome and acceptance to everyone.**

Because of this love and acceptance, children feel welcomed and affirmed each Sunday morning as they stand before you singing praise to God. Because of this love and acceptance, new people find a place to belong. Because of this love and acceptance you make a difference





in people's lives here at church and in the community.

**What a gift each of you are to our church, to the community, and to me.**

**Thank you for surrounding everything we do in prayer.** Each and every Monday, the prayer team – start-

ed by the "Unbinding the Gospel" class – prays for God's love to be made real through our church. **We give thanks for all you do in Jesus' name, and we lift up the needs in our community and world for healing and grace.** Your faithfulness and witness are at the heart of each prayer offered.

As you spend time this Christmas season giving thanks for the blessings in your life, please know that you are a wonderful blessing to the Stayton United Methodist Church and to our community. **Without you, ministry could not happen. Without your generosity, fewer people would experience the love of Jesus Christ.**

Your gifts make it possible for us to continue to be Christ's presence in a hurting world. Please consider an additional year-end gift to further our ministry together.

Wishing each of you the blessings of hope, love, peace and joy that Jesus' birth brings into our world, especially during this Christmas season.

**What a gift each of you are to our church, to the community, and to me!**

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Janine

P.S. I have enclosed an envelope for your convenience. Feel free to mail it to the office or drop it in the offering plate. **Merry Christmas!**

*Janine Delaney*

P.P.S. I hope that you, your family and friends will join us for the 4 pm choir program and potluck on the 20th and the 7 pm Christmas Eve service.