



Friends,

We are immersed in an ongoing Climate Emergency. Our way of life has turned God's Creation upside down. COP27, our world's 27th attempt to change our path, held this past November in Egypt was the best attended of all time, but the final agreement included nothing about phasing out fossil fuels

(<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop27-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-sharm-el-sheikh/>).

Nevertheless, here we are, starting our new liturgical year on our first Sunday of Advent. This morning we had the pleasure of seeing the first candle lit at the Presbyterian Church, A Place for Everyone, established in an immigrant community. Jenny and I have been working with our colleagues, Karla Koll and Miguel España in this church this past year, searching to guide the youth in a discovery of their place in the created world, caring for it and loving it.

Just a bit ago Annika and I finished decorating the house, and right now Jenny is working on sewing three sets of Christmas drapes for our main living space. Keila cut some hydrangea blooms and two Peace Lilies and added them to Annika and my decorations. We also found and lit two of the candles that Keila and I hand-dipped last Christmas—physical light to echo the light we are striving to create in our lives, adding to the light we see in the people around us at the Latin American Biblical University where we serve.

The world is in a very difficult place, but we are called to be the light in the darkness. May we accept with Joy that calling, each of us. Creation is waiting! Christ is born.

Christmas Joy!

Mark, Jenny, Keila, Annika (and Fiona)