

Christmas 1999

Dear Family and Friends:

A couple of years ago, a family vacation commenced with one of our delightfully impish nephews strolling into our cabin, pointing at RV, and announcing “fried chicken”, before tooling on to the next thing that caught his eye. The pronouncement came unexpectedly and tickled our funny bones. We still cannot figure out how fried chicken related to anything going on at the time, or why the little guy had it on his mind. No matter, the week was off and running.

This has been a “fried chicken” year for us. Our plate was full of change points which seemed to come out of nowhere. Some aspects remain baffling, but the year has passed quickly without time for analysis.

There was a debate concerning the nature of the universe among ancient Greek philosophers, Some argued that stability or permanence was the true nature of things and change and diversity were distortions of the senses. They meant that there is an enduring reality underneath all the surface changes that go on around us. Others maintained that the universe was in constant flux, that permanence was an illusion, and change, the reality. The things we see, hear, and feel are all there is. We make what we can from them as they go galloping by. As this year went zooming by, full of transition points for us, we could not help but recall this ancient debate.

Our faith affirms that there is an enduring reality, that this has been set for us by God, and that he has revealed this to us preeminently in his Son. It is the birth of the One we celebrate each Christmas. It amazes us how our circumstances so regularly cause us to reflect in a new way on the central significance of Emmanuel, God with us. He graciously sought us out, made the truth plain with skin on, knowing full well that that was the kind of truth we needed amid the vicissitudes of life. Our hearts are full of praise to him for this and for you, our family and friends, who share our pilgrim trek.

May God, who is from everlasting to everlasting, changeless and true, richly bless you and yours this Yuletide.