

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Ely, Minnesota in February with rain showers instead of snow showers or expanded snow showers which we often call blizzards!

So, with the month of **MARCH** upon us it seems logical to think about a group of people called farmers.

Good farmers know how to **PREPARE** their fields in the anticipation of maximizing their potential for a bumper crop!

Good house painters know how to **PREPARE** a house in order to maximize their potential for a quality paint job!

Good teachers know how to **PREPARE** lessons before a class to maximize the potential learning experience of their eager students!

Good cooks know how to **PREPARE** ahead of time in order to maximize their potential for providing an absolutely delicious meal!

Good clowns know how to **PREPARE** special sight gags to maximize their potential for getting a good belly laugh out of their audience at each and every performance!

Apparently **PREPARING** often leads to something **GOOD!!!**

As children in the Family of God, Advent is the season of the year when we seek to **PREPARE** in heart, mind, and spirit for a wonderful **CELEBRATION** of the **CHRIST CHILD'S** birth!!!

As children in the Family of God, Lent is the season of the year when we seek to **PREPARE** in heart, mind, and spirit, for the wonderful **CELEBRATION** of new life evidenced by the Empty Tomb and the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior **JESUS CHRIST!!!**

Indeed, with Advent we begin to **PREPARE** to celebrate what we call Christmas, and then with Lent we begin to **PREPARE** to celebrate what we call Easter!!!

**CHRISTMAS** and **EASTER** go together like steak and eggs, surf and turf, peanut butter and jelly, or maybe even rutabagas and pasties. Just as there are some wonderful food combinations that nourish the body **CHRISTMAS** and **EASTER** go hand in hand to nourish the spirit's of God's Children, "all are we"!!!

**CHRISTMAS** and **EASTER** are matching book ends!!! If you pause to think about it **CHRISTMAS** is about new life which is found in the form of baby Jesus born in that "O Little Town of Bethlehem"; while **EASTER** is about new life which is found in the "Empty Tomb" and the "Resurrection" of God's Son, Jesus!!! Indeed, matching book ends of **NEW LIFE!!!**

**CHRISTMAS** and **EASTER** are matching book ends!!! If you pause to think about it **CHRISTMAS** is about **GOD'S** love for us in the form of **GOD'S** gift of **JESUS**; while in like manner **EASTER** is about **GOD'S** love for us displayed through a cross and **JESUS!!!** Indeed, matching book ends of **LOVE!!!**

Yes, we as children in the Family of God have at least two very powerful reasons for entering the season of **LENT** seeking to **PREPARE** in heart, mind, and spirit, for a **EASTER CELEBRATION** grounded in **NEW LIFE** and **LOVE!!!**

Love in Christ,

Pastor Dana