

*Behold, I bring you good news of great joy. —Luke 2.10 To know and be known is the lot of man called by God—Hippolytus*

**Beloved brothers and sisters of the Upper Midwest Diocese:**

Happy Advent and—almost—Merry Christmas!

As I write you my first Christmas Letter as your bishop, my heart is full of joy! How much Jesus has done in our midst in this last year--a new diocese, a consecration service of remarkable beauty and power, and several new churches planted in this the earliest phase of our much desired Revival of Word and Sacrament infused by the Holy Spirit.

And, now, as we approach the Feast of the Nativity, we who are Christians celebrate the news that Jesus Christ—fully God and fully Man—knows us. Yes, God has entered into this alarming and dark world, into the disturbing darkness in our own hearts to know us and to be known by us. He forgives us; He frees us from sin. We can be changed. Alleluia!

I always find myself touched by a phone call, humorous text or small gift from a friend or family member that communicates a knowledge of me—my sense of humor, my quirks, my interests. But I am transformed when I spend time in God's Word and in His Presence (2 Cor. 3.18) and receive the reality that Jesus knows me, the Father is looking after me and the Holy Spirit fills me.

We are known! May this comfort us in our times of isolation and anxiety. And may this move us to share the good news of great joy.

On behalf of Katherine and our children, please know our love and regular prayers for you.

Your brother,

+Stewart Upper Midwest

P.S. I so look forward to seeing many of you in my deanery visits and other Upper Midwest Diocese occasions over the next several months. Please take a look at the forthcoming events below.

### **Diocese Events**

Jan 30-Feb 1 Deans and Bishops Council in Mpls MN Feb 2  
Minnesota Deanery Visit March 2 Wisconsin Deanery Visit March 25-  
27 Clergy and Spouse Retreat in ? Wisconsin April 6 Greenhouse  
Deanery Visit May 15-17 Midwest Anglican Spring Conference at  
Church of the Resurrection Wheaton, Illinois