



Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,

When my son was a few months old, I began writing letters to him: stories of my life, as well as some of my family's collective history (my Grandmère already put together an extensive history of my mother's side of the family). At the time, I had just begun working as a hospital chaplain, and every day I witnessed the fragility of life. Knowing one's heritage and history is important, because it helps us understand our identity. I wanted to make sure *my son's* heritage and history were written down, in case I wasn't able to share them with him.

Yesterday, while searching for something on my laptop, I came across the letters. They span the course of about 12 years, and since he's now 21 you can see that for quite a while I've been very bad at writing them (that would be a good goal for the New Year). In the letters I see a lot of things that I wonder now if I should be sharing with him—honest confessions of the moments of brokenness and struggle that perhaps a child doesn't need to know about his parents. Yet, I shared them because I know that he will have his *own* moments of brokenness and struggle, and I want him to remember that he's not in the struggle alone, and that there's always—*always*—hope. Because God is good, and God is faithful. When we see how others have not only endured, but also found joy, it encourages us in our own times of trial.

As people of faith, our collective history—the stories of all who have come before us, finished their race, and kept the faith—is in the Bible. In those stories we see the triumphs and the defeats, the resilience and the brokenness. Above all, we see God's great faithfulness and enduring love, and that's the greatest definer of who we are: the beloved children of God. Because God is good, and God is faithful, there is always—*always*—hope. In the Christmas story we see the unfolding of God's promises, and we marvel in Emmanuel, God with us. This defining moment for all people is the greatest story of all. A blessed last week of Advent to you all! I hope to see you all for our special service on Christmas Eve!

Pastor Kara

