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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
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A Christmas Message from Bishop Hirsch

“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” —John 1:11-12

You Are Not Alone.

Christ was born to a family who were soon on their own and running for their lives. Jesus would be rejected and ridiculed, maligned and crucified, and the government was on his shoulders. This was done to save you, and all people, from believing that you don't matter and to assure those who do believe and receive him that they are children of God.

Christmas leaves some feeling terribly lonely and forgotten, and it is good to pay attention and reach out to the isolated or rejected and let them know someone has noticed and cares. As God is with you, go be with someone who needs you. Let them know that they are not alone as well. Think of those in nursing homes and shelters and even prisons but don't forget the corners of your own living rooms and your neighbors and friends.

One of the most devastating parts of the efforts of mass deportation is the separation of families and the inability to know where people are and to visit them in detention. Even when we cannot get to be with the people we care about, we trust and believe that God is with them and that nothing can separate them from this eternal love.

This is the simple and life affirming power of Christmas. **God is with us.** I don't know what next year will bring, but I do know that you don't have to face it alone. May God's love and presence be yours now and forever.

+Bishop Phil Hirsch