



My mother's greatest fear for me when growing up was that I would become a hermit. I am an introvert by nature, and spending a lot of time around other people (no matter how much I am enjoying myself) drains my energy. I need regular periods of time to myself to "recharge" my social battery.

During this time of year, when it seems to be dark and cold *all* the time, it's so easy to choose staying home over facing the elements to spend time with others. And yet, one of the first things God observes about human beings is that "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18).

I can certainly attest to that. Left on my own for too long, I can spiral into depression. Left to my own counsel, I can rationalize bad decisions. Left to observe life from the margins too long, I can become cynical that there is no good in the world.

This Advent season, I invite you to shake off the chains of isolation and hopelessness. Join in the warm embrace of wonder and community here at Juniata as we experience the miracle of this season: God is with us. Emmanuel.

Jesus' coming into the world offers us transformation: from isolation to community, from scarcity to generosity, from fear to celebration. But we have to embrace it. So step into the light of fellowship, and join us in worship and study, in giving and service, in comfort and laughter. Let us be participants in this life God has gifted us, not just spectators.

And in Christ and the fellowship of others, may we discover anew the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love that God has poured out so generously for us.

Pastor Denise