

Dear Friends,

When my first wife passed away in 2001, the loneliest times for me were the evenings of holidays when the family were bedding down for the night. They all had their significant others to sleep next to, share reflections upon the day, and me, knowing I would be going home alone after the gathering was done. There is much to be thankful for, though for some, the holidays were never some people's thing and that is true for a variety of reasons. Seasons change, children come and go, grandkids as well. Homes where we celebrate are now different as people move; as grandparents where we always went, have moved into new places or passed away.

Some years we really feel it and go in whole hog with decorating and baking and parties and caroling and touring the neighborhoods looking at Christmas lights. Some years we feel like the Grinch and our hearts just can't take it, so we do minimal decorating, stay home, and definitely don't watch the Hallmark Christmas Explosiathon of romances between small town people and their rival then soul mate from the big city.

Each holiday season cannot be better than the one before and we shouldn't try. We can listen to our lives and hearts and family, and figure out what is the best way to honor this season. Is it time to bring back the old or something totally different? Is it time to be the Elf and experience everything or the Bear who finds a good place to hibernate until all is done? We do have some obligations and shouldn't be too selfish, but we can find ways to balance life out, even if just a little bit.

This advice may be already too late as we are now in the thick of it with plays, concerts, and everything else. What matters is somewhere, somehow you find yourself loved and cared for. You find that one thing (but hopefully more) that reminds you that you are God's child, God's beloved, Christ's sibling. There is Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy to be found, even if only in small quantities.

Peace  
Pastor Enno