



Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

The angels declared, “We bring good news of great joy!” to the announcement of the birth of Jesus! Though we can’t announce another birth or Jesus’ return, there is still good news to be shared in our world, even in these times:

‘Landmark’ climate deal was struck at COP28...

Nearly 200 nations have agreed to “transition away from fossil fuels” at the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, in what is being hailed a “landmark” agreement.

It was certainly a historic moment for climate rhetoric and especially significant given that major petrostates signed up (despite reportedly trying to keep “fossil fuels” out of the final text). Nations also pledged to triple renewable energy capacity by the end of the decade – an ambitious but achievable target.

Animal comebacks...

Kiwi chicks have hatched in Wellington, the New Zealand capital, for the first time in more than 150 years. The new chicks come a year after the Capital Kiwi Project reintroduced the country’s iconic national bird to the city.

“This is a significant milestone for the mission to restore a large-scale wild population of kiwi to the hills of our capital city,” said the organization, in a statement. “Much work lies ahead – but these chicks mark a significant step on that path.”

Long Rail investment...

The US has been a relative laggard when it comes to rail travel, but that looks set to change. On Friday, the Biden administration announced the largest federal investment in rail in generations, with \$8.2bn (£6.48bn) going towards 10 major rail projects.

Among the proposed new routes is a high-speed link between Vegas and Rancho Cucamonga (a city joined to Los Angeles).

“These historic projects will create tens of thousands of good-paying, union jobs, unlock economic opportunity for communities across the country, and open up safe, comfortable, and climate-friendly travel options to get people to their destinations in a fraction of the time it takes to drive,” said the government.

Protests against Israeli government actions keep pressure...

There are hundreds of protests, some gathering hundreds of thousands of people of all nationalities, faiths, and ethnicities on every continent calling for the Israeli government to cease bombing Palestine and work towards a true peace that disables the apartheid system that the Palestinians live under. The world is standing up to this unjust military action.

First Congregation Grand Marais spreads Holiday cheer...

Food Gift Cards: In local news, the board of directors gave our food gift cards to the local families given to the social worker at ISD 166. Last year, there was about \$1,000 left over after we paid the expenses for the Community Thanksgiving Meal and they were turned into gift cards for Johnson's Food and Whole Foods Co-op. We didn't have many people asking for extra help so with \$800 left, the board decided they should be distributed and not just sitting in office waiting to be used. The social worker told me she has a list of families that definitely need these and they will be sent home with the students as they leave for Christmas break.

Carolling: Last night a group of about 10 people gathered at the church and walked around the neighborhood spreading a little holiday cheer by caroling. It was cold and windy, but our hearts were full and smiles were shared in our community.