

Get Involved: Pray



EMBRACE Prayer Group January 2014

There is a significant amount of data indicating that the Christmas/New Year season is one of the most difficult times of the year for many people. And you don't have to think long to realize why that is. It's the darkest time of year – at least for us in the northern hemisphere. It's cold and getting colder.

But then the holiday season itself can be fraught with stress. For some people it can be very lonely if they don't have family or friends to spend Christmas and the New Year with. For others it is the financial stress that comes with the holidays and the compounded load of "to-do's": gift shopping, decorations, cooking, cards, social obligations, etc.

It seems to me that there is a lovely symmetry to the timing of Christ being born in December; light and grace came to Bethlehem at the darkest, coldest time of the year. So the celebration of Christmas should naturally provide a wonderful social construct to combat the cold and the darkness. It should be the time to slow down a bit, sleep a little longer, enjoy a crackling fire, connect with friends and family, and allow grace to pervade into the corners of life. But this symmetry is under some duress from the pressures of the modern era.

So let us be mindful of what the Christmas season really ought to be. And let us be prayerful as believers that grace will abound to all at this time – particularly to those who are alone. And may the light of Christ shine through us into the darkness.

Contributed by Zachary Schmidt, EMBRACE NI volunteer

This month we give thanks for:

- The birth of Christ
- Warmth, shelter, and good food
- Friends and family

Please pray for:

- Comfort for those who are alone
- Greater Unity in the Church to shine the light of Christ into the world