

I remember my home growing up. It was on the west side of Cleveland... I still dream about it. It was a place where I felt safe, where my family was and it was full of wonderful Christmas memories. My senior year of college, my parents moved to the shores of Lake Erie. It's every west sider's dream in Cleveland to get to the lake, and they finally made it. But my home was gone. In fact, I had to find directions to my parents' home for Christmas break.

I still dream about the home where I grew up. I still miss it and can still remember every feature of it. And I realize that all of us have a deep longing for home. At Christmastime, I think it's especially poignant and deep for people. Many of our Christmas carols talk about being home for Christmas and how hard it is when we're not.

Then I remembered that Mary and Joseph were not home for Christmas that first year. They were far from their home, far from their people. They were way down in Bethlehem, far from Nazareth. How disorienting that must have been for them.

But the truth is, Mary and Joseph were exactly at home for Christmas because with them was the Christ child. Jesus is our true home. That's our hope at Christmastime and our hope the year round. We are never far from home because Christ is as near to us as our own breath or our own pulse. So, wherever you find yourself this year, dear church, remember that Jesus is with you, and you are home for Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.