



December 24, 2023

From the Addiction & Recovery Taskforce: Holidays

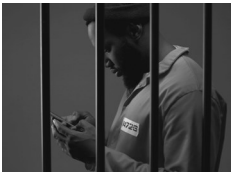
The holidays are upon us. For all of us the holidays can bring many reactions: joy and excitement as well as sadness for those who are not with us. Family tensions can come to the surface. Emotions may run high. For those in recovery this can serve as a trigger to seek a relief in old habits such as alcohol or drug abuse.

When you are hosting a holiday event be sure to include a good selection of nonalcoholic beverages. If someone says no to the offer of an alcoholic drink, accept what they say and do not press them. Where I live in Schuylkill County, Christmas is boilo time. People compete for the best recipe. It is potent alcoholic mix that is shared in love. But love comes in many ways and the best way to love someone in recovery is to support that recovery.



From the Addiction & Recovery Taskforce: Give the Gift of Connection

There are still nine inmates left without a Pen Pal in our Pen Pal program. If you are looking for a gift to give that will leave a lasting impact, look no further than giving a little bit of your time to another person who has lost hope.



To find out more about this opportunity to be a blessing to a stranger, contact us at psec.ar.taskforce@gmail.com and we will put you in touch with someone who can explain the program and be your coach for the connection.

God is doing something right now, right here.

It is Christmas Eve! Merry Christmas! I hope you are enjoying a wonderful celebration surrounded by the people you love and who love you. I hope every expectation you had for this holiday season has become real.

But if you are far from home or feel distant from those who are very near, if there is more tension than cheer in the air, if you are exhausted, or feel letdown, or if your life feels like an unlikely place for Jesus to show up—pay particular attention. Because Jesus is always showing up in unlikely places.

The news of Jesus' birth is announced not in a palace or a temple, not where things are bright and beautiful, not to good people, or *the right* people. Shepherds, and poor, smelly people were the first to get the news; and the first to share it. As surprising as this would have been at the time, in retrospect it seems entirely fitting. Jesus is forever showing up in unlikely places and associating with the most surprising people. And the message is always the same—God is doing something right now, right here.

"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night... The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord.'"

This is the announcement that changed the world. I hope it's the one that will change yours.

With prayers for a changed world and a very Merry Christmas,

Bill

Rev. William P. Worley, Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Minister

