

## **Advent Devotional December 6, 2021**

### **Scripture**

Psalm 145:8-9

*The Lord is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
The Lord is good to all,  
and his compassion is over all that he has made.*

### **Devotional**

#### **The Rev. Jeff Eddings '08**

Life often confronts us with challenging relational situations that immediately recall in us some form of response. Depending on the nature of the conflict, those responses can stir in us a multitude of feelings. Anger or frustration at someone who has wronged us. Guilt or anxiety over ways we may have wronged others. Often the first response in such a scenario is anything but compassion. But what if we were able to make compassion the first response instead of the last?

When Jesus was approached by the hungry multitudes after a long and tiring day, his first response was not to send them away (as the disciples suggested!), nor was it to get angry at their unending demands. His first response was compassion. "He saw a great crowd; and he had compassion on them" (Mark 6:34).

The psalm says "the Lord has compassion over all that he has made." The incarnation is the compassionate response of God to a world that is often in conflict with God's love and purpose for God's creation. It is God's first response to us and not the last!

So in this season of incarnational compassion, let our first response also be one of compassion. Whatever the challenge or conflict, can we first respond to our friend or sibling with compassion? Can we respond compassionately to ourselves when we know we have failed or fallen short of the love required of us? This Advent season, let us follow Jesus more closely by letting our first response be one of compassion.

### **Prayer**

Gracious God, may we celebrate who we are as we celebrate who you are this Advent season. Thank you for the compassion that comes to us through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. May compassion be our first response to ourselves, others, and all that happens in the world around us as we seek to follow you this Christmas season.