



OUT OF THE ASHES CAME HOPE

# CLARION

Serving The People Of The New Community Network

## Joy To The World!

**Holiday Message By  
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For most of us, Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the holiday season which extends through the start of the new year. During this time, we celebrate with family and friends; eat and drink to our heart's content; and use all of our cash and credit to make sure "Santa" shows up at our house. Christmas carols can be heard in the malls and on the radios: Jingle Bells, All I Want for Christmas, Joy to the World!

Unfortunately, while absorbed in the culture of consumerism that pervades our society, we often forget about those who are less fortunate than we ourselves, and those who might be experiencing tragedy during this season.

In the United States, the richest country in the world, over 40 million people live in poverty and the number of homeless individuals continues to grow. The working poor (people who work every day but do not make a livable wage) continue to struggle. There are families camped out at our borders hoping for a new life in America and many people already here, who are praying for better days to come. But their cries get lost in the jingling of bells and for them, there is no joy.

The issues faced by the poor and disenfranchised cannot be solved by a doll under the tree or a tin can of Christmas cookies. We must collectively strive to create a more just society. That begins with creating effective poverty reduction policies and programs, addressing social and economic inequality as well as holding political figures accountable for representing the people who put them in office.

We often feel powerless and think we can't make a difference. But there are many ways each of us can bring joy to someone else. Visit an elderly relative or friend. Go to a nursing home and sit with a patient who never has visitors. Forgive someone you have been angry with for years. Volunteer at a food bank. Read a book to a child. Pray for the thousands of people whose homes were destroyed in the California wildfires. There are plenty of things — some large, some small — we can do to make a difference and spread joy.

As we celebrate this holiday season and transition to a new year, let us strive to uplift and empower the downcast and to remember that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Joy is reciprocal and contagious. When you give it to others, you receive it in return. Joy to the World!