Dear Saints of St Columba,

This is my final epistle for the year, 2022! Luke the evangelist writes, at the birth of Jesus, the angels sang, Luke 2: 14, "*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on Earth among those whom God has favoured!*"

Sitting here on a Tuesday, writing these words, I have been contemplating the musings of journalists and commentators weighing in on the outcome of the ANC Elective Conference. Years ago, I was at the first elective conference in Durban, after the release of uTata Mandela, representing faith communities for the Standing For the Truth Campaign. Much has passed in the intervening years.

It appears that President Ramaphosa now has a stronger hand than he did for his first term. We pray this will be good for the country.

Our prayer is for peace, as the angels sang.
The witness of Scripture is that peace is a consequence of justice. And justice, as the UPCSA GS, Rev Dr Mpetsheni preached on 5th December at our Holy Communion Service, justice is the work of Jesus.

This Christmas, let's "keep Xrist in Xmas", by serving the world, jiving for justice, praying towards peace, feeding the poor, sheltering the sick, healing the homeless; by learning, unlearning, and relearning, as we worship, work and witness together as the family of God.

At the end of this hard year, I want to thank each of the staff, Christoff and Suzanne, for their commitment and hard work. Also, to Paula, who is ever-faithful and encouraging. Ryan, thank you for all your amazing gifts you share with us, your technical expertise, and accounting acumen. We as Session appreciate you; I appreciate you.

To the elders and new elders and leaders, treasurer, StewComm, thank you for this year. Let's consolidate and re-build in 2023.

To our wonderful organists who have accompanied faithfully us this year, we thank you! And to the readers and worship leaders, we look forward to a great new year of worship.

We have lost loved ones this year; members who have gone on to higher service. We honour those who have gone before us. Let us then keep on keeping on; hoping against hope; as we fix our eyes onto Christ. *Maranatha*! It is a New Testament word meaning, *Come, Lord Jesus*!

May this time of Xmas be a blessing to you and those whom you love.
Merry Christmas to you all and a happy New Year!

I remain,

Craig & Jenni,

25 December 2022/ epistle