



The Diocesan Board of Education

The Ven Dr Justine Allain Chapman
Chair, Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education

December 2023

Dear Friends –

Have you made any Christmas presents or cards this year or written cards or gift tags? I enjoy seeing the new Christmas things people make each year like knitted angels and different biscuit shapes. I have heard adults often say that they really love to receive gifts from children and young people that they have made themselves.

I love doing Secret Santa. I expect you know how it works. Rather than buying a present for a lot of people, you pick a name out of hat and buy one present just for them. You might have to make your present or there's a limit on how much you spend. And everyone is included. Everyone gets a present, but not the same present.

I like Secret Santa because, although I'm not great at making things, I don't need to worry about buying lots or about leaving anyone out. But I do have to think carefully about the person whose name I got and choose what would be just right for them.

That's what God does in the nativity story. Each person round the crib is there because God loves all the world and each of us. In the scene, everyone is included – poor, wise, educated, excluded, simple, foreigners, animals. And the

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story shows how God brought each one to the manger in a special way that touched their hearts. Scientific astronomers needed a new star and an adventurous journey, Mary needed a loving protector, shepherds needed the excitement of noisy bright angels.

The experiences of the people round the crib were gifts from God to them, gifts which touched their hearts. Perhaps they weren't secret, because we all know about them, but they were private and like so many specially chosen and homemade gifts are treasured.

This Christmas, as you give and receive, I hope and pray that God will touch your hearts with love and our world with the peace that the Christ child came to bring.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justine Allain Chapman". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Justine" being the most prominent.

The Ven Dr Justine Allain Chapman, Archdeacon of Boston
Chair of Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education