



08 December 2021

Dear Members and Friends of IAMSCU:

I bring you Advent greetings as we prepare for Christmas and welcome a New Year. I have always been drawn to the rhythm of the Christian calendar and am now grateful for Advent. Each season holds its story and reveals new wisdom of the ages as we live within it. I find Advent as standing in contrast to, but not contrary to other seasons of the Christian year. Advent shifts our gaze outward to see the unfiltered condition of the world but does not leave us alone and overwhelmed. We are being attuned to sense, prepare, and recognize what is coming, the gift that interrupts the status quo, the very incarnation, God with us. Other seasons of the Christian year call us to an inner self-reflection much like a wilderness journey. This is the experience when, like it or not, chosen or not, the space we occupy, and the time spent there, is expansive. Direction out is not clear, life-giving resources are not obvious. But even there, void of distraction, we can hear that still small voice well up within us as we find our way oriented by hope. Advent is a moment for signs and wonders of new life. Our Creator is always at work and holds humanity with deep regard. In Advent we are invited to make preparation for our Creator's gift, as if for the first time. It focuses and enlivens us.

We are IAMSCU. Our gaze of the world is intentionally, holistically global. In the spirit of Advent, we look outside for the ever-emerging signs of life. It comes in the forms of new and deeper understandings of what our Wesleyan heritage is calling us to, the eagerness for student exchange, schools bringing life to each other by sharing collaborations. And in the spirit of those times of wilderness sojourn, we have the priceless opportunity to stand with each other, eyes wide open and looking, senses tuned and listening, looking for ways to address the enormity of world problems. This pandemic continues. I am grateful for IAMSCU's first step in naming and addressing the need for global vaccine equity.

IAMSCU lives simultaneously in two complementary realms. It is illustrated by a place I once served that saw themselves as, a "Keeper of the Questions and a Nerve Exposed to Pain." We are both a keeper of a tradition that guides us and engages us in the world. It provides continuity while also being able to see and respond directly out of love for the whole world. Our gift is through our collective schools and the education that empowers individuals and communities. Our gaze includes a long path toward the future and the immediate needs of the world.

As we greet the new year, I look forward to our meeting on 1 February 2022. Please hold that date. Information will be forthcoming from our Executive Secretary, Amos Nascimento. The Executive Committee will be meeting in mid-January to finalize our agenda. We will send it in advance of the meeting.

As always, I look forward to seeing all of you very soon.

Blessings,

Rev. Thomas V. Wolfe, PhD  
IAMSCU President