

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2020



Lenka Collakova, NP and Mahesh Bandara, MD, who care for patients in the Special Care Unit of Southern Maine Health Care are two of the first to be vaccinated against COVID-19!

Dearly beloved,

On Tuesday evening, my sister Lisa sent these photos of the first nurse and doctor at the hospital where she works being vaccinated against COVID-19. With deep sorrow for those who lost loved ones in this deadly pandemic and joy for all who, thanks to this Chanukah miracle, will carry forth their memory, the Ben Harper/Blind Boys of Alabama song we used to sing during Candles of Sorrow and Joy is playing in my heart:

There will be,
There will be,
There will be a light.

Many thanks to Queen Santa and her Elves, Barbara Gindhart and Darrell Waters, who were out in the cold on Tuesday evening handing out Christmas Eve candles to passersby! If you live near the church, there's yet another chance to get yours: this Sunday afternoon between 2:00 and 4:00. Come say hello and visit Santa's selfie station! Most importantly, please be sure to welcome friends and family, neighbors and coworkers to our [Christmas Eve Services](#) (7:00 and 9:00). And yes, you can BYOC (bring your own candle!). *It is always the same light.*

More highlights of this coming weekend:

* ASC Social welcomes you to a low-key [holiday Zoom gathering](#) tomorrow evening, Friday the 18th, starting at 5:30. Make a cuppa and come say hello!

* There is a free, [virtual open Messiah sing](#) on Saturday afternoon, the 19th, at 2:00. This event will be hosted on youtube by the Hudson Valley Philharmonic and Cappella Festiva, with lyrics on the screen and commentary by conductor Christine Howlett. So far, 268,000 people plan to be there! Hallelujah!

and

* This Sunday morning is our beloved Lessons and Carols service! Almost-Rev. Ali and Revs. Beth, Eric, Fred, and Jo will join me in sharing readings and stories of the season; and all of us will be singing a lot of Christmas carols, including *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *O Christmas Tree*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, *Give Love on Christmas Day*, *Christmas Lullaby*, and *Angels We Have Heard on High*. For a very special treat, we'll enjoy a Christmas Eve preview: Director of Music Mark David Buckles conducts the Arlington Street Choir in a *'Tis the Season medley* — their virtual debut!

I want to say a little more about Christmas Eve. When it became clear that we could not be together in the sanctuary on that holy night, Craig Coogan, Executive Director of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus, and Music Director Reuben Reynolds offered Mark David and me unlimited access to professional recordings of BGMC holiday concerts from the New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall. Their videographer, Michael Willer, remastered the pieces we chose, and our Tech Team lead, Art Nava, took it from there. Art let me peek at what he's putting together for us, and I will tell you this: at the very first first moment, my eyes filled with tears ... and they were tears of joy. It's going to be *beautiful!*

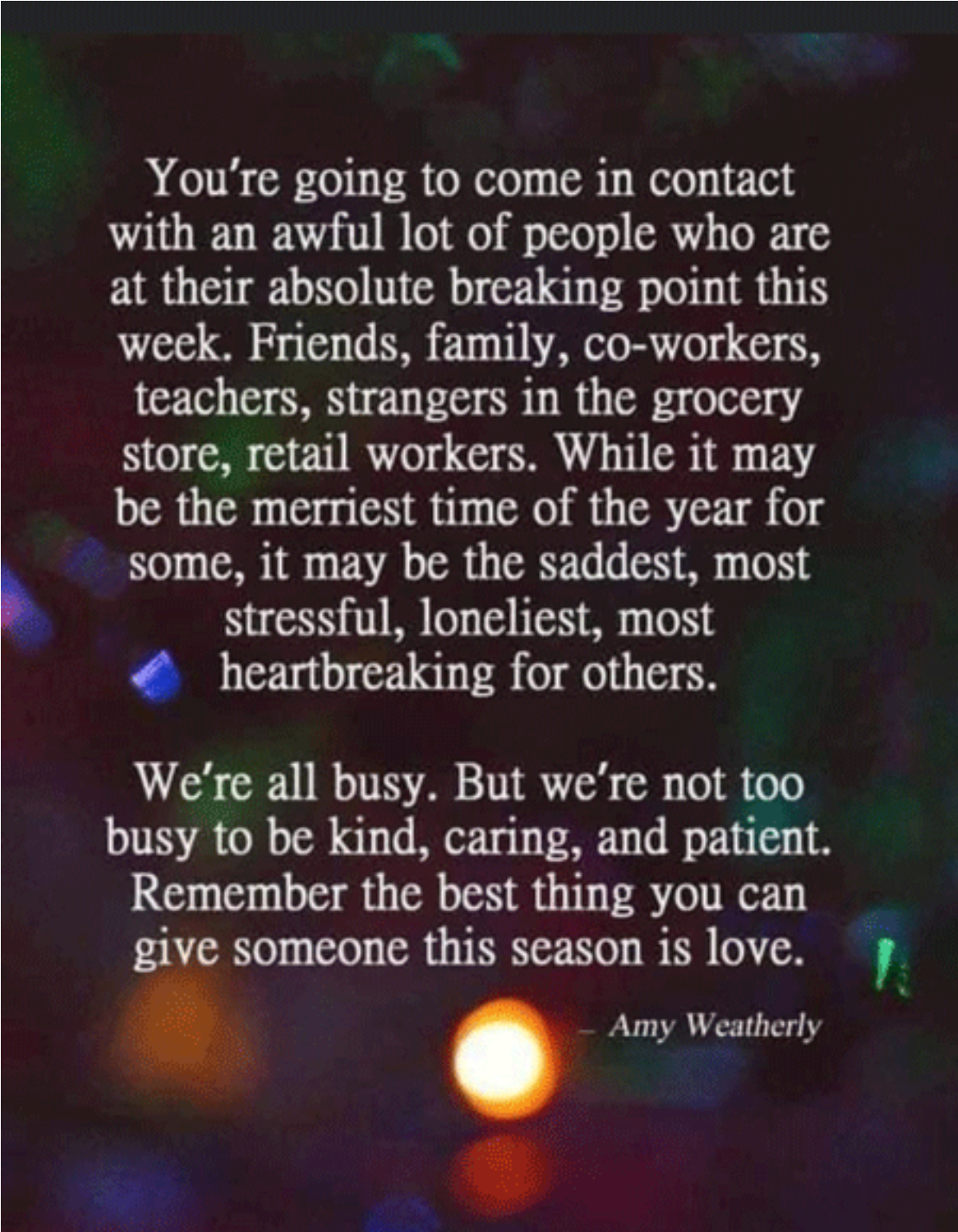
And as if they had not already been beyond generous, the BGMC has offered to let us use their (much "bigger") Zoom room for the evening, so we can "seat" 1,000 people per service. Please join me in thanking my beloved friends and colleagues Craig and Reuben, as well as all the members of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus, especially our beloved Al Ingram, who serves as a leader in both organizations.

As we approach the darkest day of winter,

We gather in the chill of winter,
finding warmth from each other,
nourishing hope where reason fails.
Grateful for miracles large and small,
let us rejoice in the wonder of
making light in the darkness.

*Faithfully yours, with love,
Kim*

p.s. Thanks to all of you who have donated to [All Souls ~ A Campaign for the Preservation of Arlington Street Church!](#) Two weeks to go!



You're going to come in contact with an awful lot of people who are at their absolute breaking point this week. Friends, family, co-workers, teachers, strangers in the grocery store, retail workers. While it may be the merriest time of the year for some, it may be the saddest, most stressful, loneliest, most heartbreaking for others.

We're all busy. But we're not too busy to be kind, caring, and patient. Remember the best thing you can give someone this season is love.

— Amy Weatherly

Hanukkah Lights, Congregation Beth El, Sudbury, MA