



## With exceeding joy 2017 LWF Christmas Message

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

On behalf of the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, it is with exceeding joy that I bring you Christmas greetings from the confluence town of Numan, which hosts the headquarters of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria.

In spite of the enormous challenges that threaten fullness of life around the world, I chose to greet you with the words “exceeding joy” because of my Christian conviction, expressed in the words of Luke 2:13-14:

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

Although the forces of evil seek to undermine our common humanity, God’s peace that transcends all understanding abides with us. God’s peace comforts us in times of turbulence and crisis.



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This hymn of praise, sung by the host of heaven at the announcement of the birth of the Messiah echoes God's promise of benevolence and favor.

Today, we are truly facing countless atrocities: terror attacks even in worship places, unashamed abuse of political power, violent religious extremism, nuclear proliferation, unjustified show of military might, and systemic injustices and economic systems propelled by greed.

In addition, people are confronted with the impact of drastic climate change that some still deny, sordid cases of people being trafficked and/or sold as slaves, gender-based violence, forced and irregular migration and the refugee crisis among many other issues.

Such is the painful experience in many countries and families globally, wherever the powers of darkness are at work.

We may even be pushed to ask; where is God in such excruciating circumstances? Precisely, God is with us, God watches and reassures us, that our redemption is nigh. It is this assurance that defines our journey, not the forces of darkness.

Like the shepherds who did not waste time, but sped off to share and act on the good news they had received from the angel, let us in this season of Christmas and New Year commit ourselves to proclaim the good news of our redemption that compels us to be instruments of peace, justice, and life-giving actions that enrich all humanity as people embodying the image of God.

May the hymn of the angels

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

remain in our hearts and community, and may each one of us be a source of loving, caring and healing to our neighbors.

I pray that God's assured blessings abide with you this Christmas and into the year 2018.

Merry Christmas.



Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa  
President of The Lutheran World Federation

Photo: Confirmation students from the Windhoek area clasped hands as they formed a Luther Rose at the Global Commemoration of the Reformation in Windhoek, Namibia on 14 May 2017.  
LWF/Johan Celine Valeriano

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