



Dear sisters around the world,

In the city of Baltimore, Maryland – often one of the most violent in America – it can be easier to find fear than to see love. But in one neighborhood, they are changing the narrative. In years past, they chose to celebrate holidays with lights, decorations, and festivities – hoping their little community would be a welcome respite from some of the darkness around them. But for one resident last winter, the decorations were not enough to dispel the depth of despair and loneliness she felt during the COVID-19 pandemic. She shared with a neighbor how she was feeling, so the neighbor decided to take action.

She strung a set of lights across the street to connect their houses to remind her neighbor she was not alone. Then all the neighbors started to do the same. Before they knew it, the entire neighborhood was lit with strings of lights connecting house to house across the streets. One neighbor created a lighted sign that read: “Love Lives Here.” This year they continued the tradition of stringing lights from house to house to show their community that love still lives there.

What a neighborhood and what a witness! This Christmas season there are many in our respective communities who are living in fear, others who are grappling with grief, and some suffering with loneliness that has led to despair. But friends, we have good news. The Message translation of John 1:14 reads: “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.”

The Son of God knew we could not go to him, so he came to us – bringing love and light with him. The baby in a manger would grow into the Savior on a cross, but even death was no match for the love of God. And because He lives, now we can live through Him. What happens when we live through him? We become walking testaments to the world that “Love Lives Here.”

Friends, do people in your community know you by your love? Do they long to enter your church and your home because they know they will find love there? I believe the answer is yes. I have been encouraged to hear your stories and to know that BWA Women are stringing the light of Christ’s love each day. You are making a difference – welcoming the refugees, caring for the sick, and standing with the persecuted.

So this Christmas, even though weariness seeks to capture our souls, may we pause to celebrate the Savior willing to become a neighbor. May we welcome him once again into our neighborhoods, but most of all, into our hearts. And may we always be the first to love – showing all we meet that love lives here.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas,



J. Merritt Johnston  
Executive Director  
BWA Women



**BWA WOMEN** | *Thriving Together*

