

The year 2020 is nearly behind us and, for many, none too soon. The global COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we did everything, including how Davis & Elkins College operated.

Now, as you recharge from a hectic fall semester, I encourage you to find peace and love this holiday season. Whether this special time includes Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Orthodox or other meaningful celebrations, these are opportunities to look inward and reflect.

As we enter this holiday season, we are reminded that it is a time to celebrate family, friends, and the things we hold dear. After an admittedly difficult year, this is a time to honor our faith or to remember the people important to us, both those who are with us and those we wish were with us. It is a time to reflect on the year and think of all the things that have happened and how we came to be here today.

For many of us, this is a time to celebrate our family and cultural heritage in whatever form that takes. For some of us, that means making the cookies or candy your grandmother used to make, making cornbread or black-eyed peas, or bringing mom's famous dish to the family potluck.

It could be decorating the Christmas tree with family, meeting friends for good food and good conversation, or watching your favorite holiday specials. Celebrating could mean hanging a Kwanzaa wreath, going to midnight Mass, honoring the solstice, lighting the menorah, looking forward to Chinese New Year, or just enjoying some time off. This time of year is many things for many people, but for all of us it is an opportunity to stop and reflect on the people who give our lives meaning.

That is what I want to focus on today. We have faced many challenges this year, and we faced them together. D&E is truly a special place, as are our students, faculty, and staff. This year was, perhaps, the strongest evidence we have seen in a long time that the power to work together can overcome such challenges.

I look forward to working with you all through another great year full of the challenges, opportunities, and surprises that may come our way in 2021. I have confidence that you will face them with as much grace, resourcefulness, and dedication as you have shown this year. May you have a peaceful, joyful, and safe holiday season and a wonderful New Year.

Chris A. Wood
President
Davis & Elkins College