Dear Families:

In class today, we studied a message in the Gospel of Matthew. In today's lesson, we heard Matthew's description of the last judgement. Jesus said that when He returns, He will gather all people off all nations and separate them, some on His right and some on His left. He will invite the group on the right into His kingdom, saying that since they treated Him kindly by giving Him food when He was hungry, a drink when He was thirsty, clothes when He had none, welcomed Him when He was a stranger, and visited Him while He was sick and in prison. The people were confused; when had they done these things? Jesus said, when they had done those things to the least of all, they had done them to Jesus. The people on the left were denied entry into the kingdom, for they had not helped Jesus when He was in need. They protested- we didn't see you in need, or we would have helped you! Jesus said by not helping the least of humanity, they did not help Him and will go away into eternal punishment.

It is important to note that the righteous did not give because they wanted salvation or were pressed to. They gave of themselves because they wanted to help. They wanted to do good in Jesus' name and for His service, not for a reward. We are called to love and serve our neighbors, especially the "least of these." You can do this with our Advent Challenges! The first challenge was announced in church today, as Advent begins next Sunday. Next week, our goal is to fill the box for the Olean Food Pantry. Please help us spread hope this Christmas by helping us collect as many food donations as possible. Let's start our new church year off on the right foot next week!

Today the class also continued preparations for our pageant, which will be held during worship service on Sunday, December 20. We hope you can join us for our special celebration of Jesus' birth!

Thank you for joining us today!

Carol McClellan, CE Director