

Christmas Address - 2017

Good evening. Thank you, Mary Miczak and the Garden Club of Essex Fells not only for keeping this great tradition intact, but also for allowing me the wonderful opportunity to address you on this very special evening. From caring for our municipal properties, to the remarkable volunteer work they do at senior care facilities, to the Mother's Day Plant Sale, to the generous and wonderful plans they have for the continued restoration of the Glen back to its bucolic beauty, the Garden Club of Essex Fells and each of its members truly show what community service and love of community is all about, and Essex Fells is so very fortunate to have the Garden Club. It is always such a privilege and honor for me to not only serve as your Mayor, but also be invited to make this Christmas Eve address, tonight marking my 16th and last address.

I would also like to thank my friends Roger Kerr, our Department of Public Works Supervisor, and the entire DPW staff and Brian Shatzel of our Water Utility; Police Chief William Theilacker and the Essex Fells Police Department, Francine Paserchia and our Administrative Staff, and Fire Chief James Kearney and my fellow firefighters with the Essex Fells Fire Department for all of their work in assisting in organizing this gathering.

Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3 teaches us:

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

This sacred list represents all the seasons and the pivotal times in our lives. Some are happy, others tragic; some are worthwhile and others seem trivial; some inspire peace and others conflict.

Yet, as Ecclesiastes tells us, all are necessary if we are to grow as is the plan for us.

As one correctly observed, "Although new beginnings are usually preferred over endings, we should remember that every new beginning requires an ending."

The flow of life is a process of change. We must learn to accept the process and go with it. And so when it's your time, you embrace it.

As many of you know, each year for the past sixteen, I have had the amazing privilege of standing before the wonderful Sixth Grade classes of the Essex Fells

School and implore them, and inspire them as best I can, to live a life based on the tenant of "Carpe Diem," to "seize the day" and to put no trust in tomorrow. I beg them to explore new opportunities, to run (not walk) to new horizons, to challenge themselves to truly be themselves and to continue to grow, and to, in the words of St. Ignatius Loyola, "go forth and set the world on fire!" Over those years, by my rough calculation, close to 500 kids have heard my impassioned plea. And maybe now, for me, I have as well.

To every thing there is a season.

Please know that I have truly loved every second of the privilege and honor of serving as your mayor. The respect and thanks I have for each of you is boundless, as you have given me the most wonderful gift any elected official can ever receive - your sacred trust and confidence that I would do the right thing. You were so giving as to elect me to serve as a Councilman almost 20 years ago, and then return me to the governing body as your Mayor four times. There are no words I can ever say to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to each of you. Your vote, your trust, and your belief in me that I could do this job made me a better Mayor and a better man. Words alone seem so inadequate, but from the very bottom of my heart and soul, thank you so very much.

Thank you to every Essex Fells department, club, organization, and volunteer group that blesses Essex Fells with their drive and commitment to do the very best for our town, her residents, and our children. We truly do live in the "Enchanted Forest."

As I tell the Kindergarten and First Graders on Read Across America day, one of our country's greatest philosophers will always guide you in your life's journeys. I've turned to Dr. Seuss many times in my life, as I do now: "Don't cry because it's over, be happy it happened." This town, you residents, and the children of Essex Fells, have made me the happiest Mayor in the world, and I will forever be humbled by that and extraordinary grateful to each and every one of you. It has been an honor, and I am forever indebted to you all.

Each year on Christmas Eve, the residents of Essex Fells gather around a beautiful tree and once again come together as close neighbors and dear friends. It is a truly extraordinary event, because this gathering shows the wonder of Christmas and we are reminded of a simple, yet all meaning and ever powerful, story:

And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them! And they were so afraid ... And the angel said unto them, "Fear not! For, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all my people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord." And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, and

good will toward men."

And that's what Christmas is all about, Essex Fells. It is about spirit and heart; it is about faith and hope; it is about the belief in life everlasting; and it is about love, and peace, and good will, and loving thy neighbor.

Let us keep the hope alive for peace on earth; let us keep our faith in our God and in our future ever growing; let us love one another, our family and friends; let us pray for those we are missing this Christmas season, for those who are ill, and ask for your blessings upon their families; and let us keep the Christmas spirit of peace and good will in our hearts always.

We pray for our Country and we pray for our nation's leaders; may they be guided by your gentle hand, warm heart and strong resolve as we face the challenges ahead; give them the courage and judgment needed to protect and fulfill, what Alexander Hamilton called, "The American Experiment."

We also pray for the safety of our nation's fire fighters, first responders, and police officers.

Lord, please bless and watch over all our brave soldiers, airmen, sailors, marines, coastguardsmen, and all the men and women in our armed forces, who at this very hour are in harm's way, with your strength and protection. Please keep them from harm as they serve their fellow countrymen and innocent people throughout the world in the cause of peace, liberty, and freedom. May angels be with them and watch over them as they perform their duties overseas and at home. May there be peace on earth, but never appeasement in our goals to serve thy will.

Sadly, families in our Borough have unfortunately, tragically, and inexplicably lost loved ones whose time should have not come. And that loss must be particularly hard and difficult in the Christmas season, and our hearts break for them. And yet, as the people of this great Borough have always done when one of our families suffer such tragic losses, our blessed community comes together and responds with a tremendous outpouring of love, compassion, support, and faith. We have experienced the inherent goodness in our little community. I hope they know that even in the darkest hours of loss and despair, they are never alone, for the people of Essex Fells, their friends and neighbors, are there for them always.

Lord - you taught us, "to everything, there is a season," and with your guidance and counsel, you have shown me that my mayoral season has come to its conclusion. I am so excited and very much look forward to your plans for my next chapter in how I can best serve you.

Please continue to bless this wonderful town with your grace and love. Please bless Mayor Elect Davis as he becomes the trustee of this very precious stone. Please bless our governing body in 2018 of Council President Wahl, and Councilmen Sullivan, King, Hindy, Cecere and D'Avella, with the wisdom and sound judgment as they go forward to

ensure that our Beloved Borough remains the very unique and special place, our own Demi-paradise. Let them always be guided by the tenets of doing the best for our people and earning their trust and confidence each day.

Please continue your blessings upon those who have held the tiller through all the storms, Francine Paserchia our Borough Administrator, Police Chief William Theilacker, Fire Chief James Kearney, Water Superintendent Steven Banchi, Assistant Borough Administrator Brittany Thunnel, Borough Recreation Director Lauren Lombardi Moussab, our Chief Financial Officer Christopher Battaglia, our Borough Counsel Martin Murphy, our Superintendent of Public Works, Roger Kerr, and all of those who work with them, and all of the many, many volunteers in Essex Fells, that, through your amazing grace, make our little 1.2 square miles, the truly “Enchanted Forest.”

Please bless my wife Jill of 35 years and counting, and our children, Ted, his wife, Dana, Kelly and her Tim, for understanding my desire to make this commitment to the people of the Borough, at their own detriment; they have been my counsel, my critic, my cheerleader, and yet always, my conscience, companions and confidants as I have made this journey committed to public service.

And lastly, dear Lord, please accept me as your humble servant and one who is before you, thanking you, on the eve of your Son’s, our Savior’s birth, for the wonderful blessing of serving this remarkably special town as Mayor for the last 16 years.

As St Ignatious Loyola teaches, “To whom much is given, much is expected.” Through your blessings, you have given me so much, I only sincerely pray that I have met even the merest of your expectations.

And so, in God’s great mercy, a Happy Christmas to you all.

Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play. Let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures.

Merry Christmas Arden, Argyl and Avon. Merry Christmas Bayberry, Beechtree, Beekman, Bloomfield, Bradley and Buttonwood. Merry Christmas Chestnut, Devon and Essex. Merry Christmas Fells, Fellscrest, Fellswood and Forest. Merry Christmas Gordon. Merry Christmas Hathaway, Hawthorne, Hillbury, Hilltop, Holly and Holton. Merry Christmas Inwood, Lenfell, Manheim and Maple. Merry Christmas Norcroft, Oak, Old Chester, Old Eagle Rock and Oval. Merry Christmas Park, Rensselaer, Roseland, and Runnymede. Merry Christmas Stewart, Stocker and Tothill. Merry Christmas Welsh, Windsor and Wootton.

Merry Christmas Calvary, St. Peter’s and Jain. Merry Christmas Essex Fells School. Merry Christmas Borough Hall, Service Building, Pump house and wells. Merry Christmas Trotter tract. Merry Christmas Pond. Merry Christmas Police and Fire Departments. Merry Christmas Post Office. Merry Christmas Christmas and Memorial trees. Merry Christmas Lombardy Field house and Essex Fells Fields.

And Merry Christmas my Essex Fells.

OK, all my Whos here in Whoo-ville – I love you all. On behalf of the Borough of Essex Fells, I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

God bless these United States, God Bless our little town; and God bless you all. Thank you

Edward P. Abbot
Mayor
Borough of Essex Fells Essex