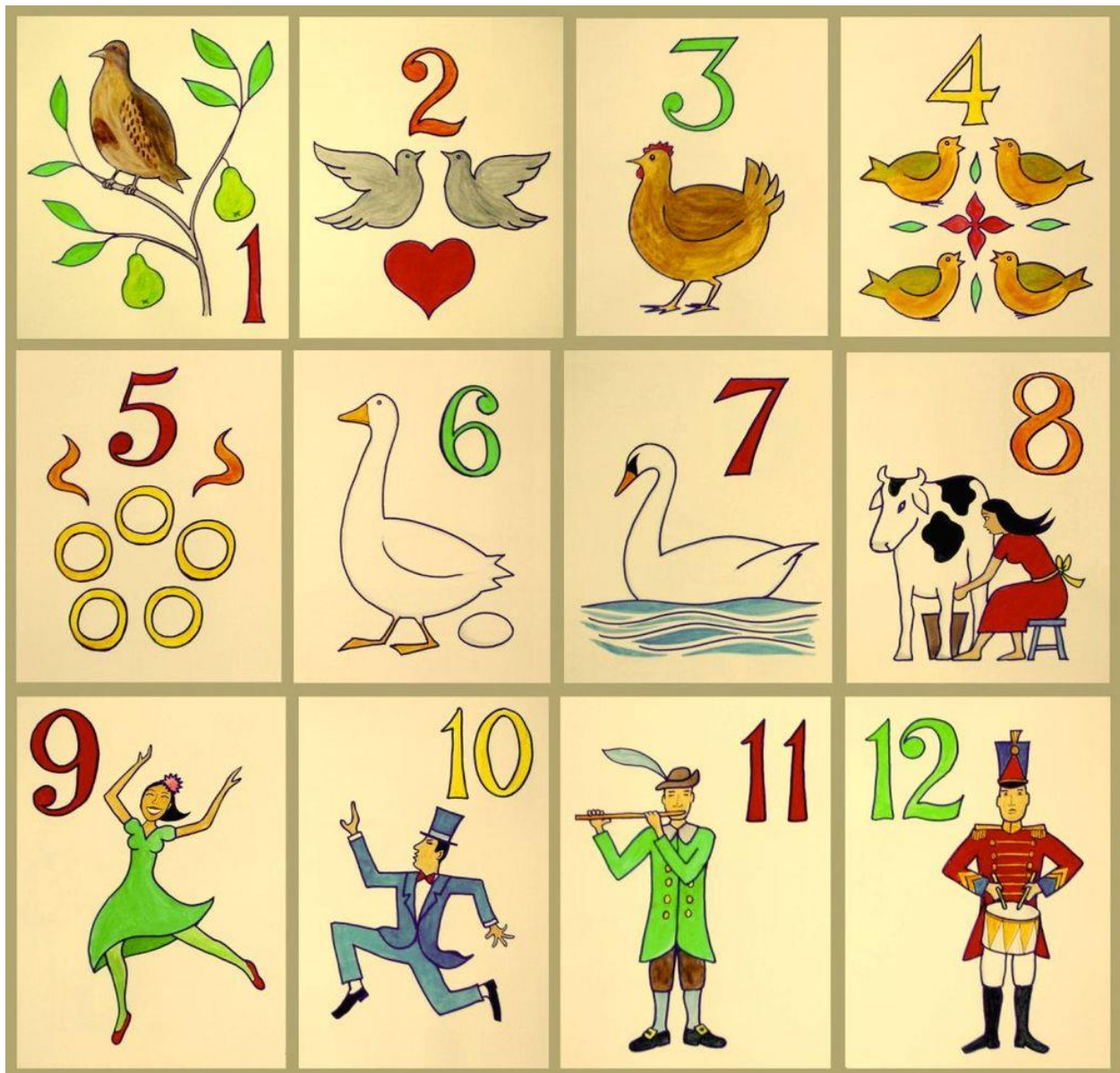




Linda's Holiday Letter December 3, 2023

The 12 Days of Winter



One of my favorite holiday songs is the *12 Days of Christmas*. It starts with the lyrical line “on the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree.” This is a cumulative song with each day adding to the gifts and then sung in reverse. The *Twelve Days of Christmas* is an English Christmas carol whose words were first published in the late eighteenth century. For this year’s winter letter, I take some license with the song and send to you, my dear students, the 12 Days of Winter. The 12 days historically begins on December 26 and ends on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

I begin my 12 Days of Winter with a blessing for each day of the 12 days. The blessing for each day is in quotation marks. It is your choice to use the blessing as you wish. You can whisper the blessing, speak it out loud or write it down in a journal. You can post the blessing on your mirror or on your refrigerator so you are reminded throughout the day. You can share your blessing with a friend or family member. Use the blessing and interpret it as you wish.

### The 12 Blessings of Winter

December 26: The Gift of awe. The Full moon today is known as the Cold Moon and will be visible in the sky tonight. “I can choose to find moments of awe in my life.”

December 27: The Gift of love for life, community and beyond. “I value life for all people.”

December 28: The Gift of loving myself. “I love and appreciate who I am and who I have become.”

December 29: the Gift of imagination and creativity. "I have the Gift to imagine and create as I desire."

December 30: The Gift of peace and freedom. " I wish for peace and freedom for all people."

December 31: The Gift of connecting with people during times of stress and loneliness. " I can connect with people I trust when I feel stressed or lonely"

January 1: the Gift of calm. "When I breathe deeply and slowly, I feel calm and at peace."

January 2: The Gift of belief. "I believe there is goodness and kindness in this world."

January 3: The Gift of nature. " I can connect with the beauty of nature and the natural world around me."

January 4: The Gift to ease suffering. "I send a blessing to people near and far to ease their pain and suffering."

January 5: The Gift of reflection: "I can reflect on my life and create a vision for how I want to be in the New Year."

January 6: The Gift of Trust: " I trust my intuition and know what is right for me in my work, relationships, friendships and family."



As 2023 fades into the New Year, let us all welcome 2024 with a commitment to health, wellbeing, gratitude and renewed spirit of courage and perseverance.

With Peace and Goodwill to All People,

*Linda*

Please note that the use of the carol is for secular purposes only