

A Word from the Pastor



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GETTING THE WORD OUT

Christmas is so familiar that we sometimes wonder whether anything fresh and true can be said about it. But there is a way to explore its meaning that may seem new to us today, yet is in fact quite traditional. Let's try to recapture the riches of the Christmas story by applying the spiritual sense of the Christmas story to our own lives. That story happens not only once, in history, but also many times in each individual's soul. Christ comes into the world — but He also comes into the lives of each of us. In that way,

Advent happens over and over again. Thus, there are two ways to connect the historical and the spiritual senses. One tells us to imaginatively place ourselves into the Gospel stories. Another tells us to look for elements of the story in our own lives. Look at the Nativity set on top of the piano in the Sanctuary. Around the Christ Child you see four people or groups: Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men and the Shepherds. They are all around the Christ Child, defined in Scripture by their relationship to Him. In a sense, we are all Marys, Josephs, Wise Men or Shepherds gathered around the Christ-child at this Season. The only thing that remains is how do you define your relationship with Him? Will He come into your life again at this Advent season and be the center of your life as He is in the Nativity setting, or will He be off to the side? It's up to you.

IT'S ON MY HEART

The abbreviation of "Xmas" for Christmas has long been criticized by church-oriented Christians as blasphemous. But, it may not be so. Rather than a sacrilegious removal of "Christ" from "Christmas" and replacing Him with an unknown, as some claim the "X" abbreviation has done in the long history of the church. In Greek, the language in which the New Testament was first written, "chi" or X, which is almost identical to the Roman alphabet "X", is the first letter in the Greek word "Christ", or as it would be written "Christos", with the "C" being an "X". In fact the symbol of the fish in the early church came from using the first letter of several titles used for Jesus (Jesus Christ Son of God Savior) when combined spell the Greek word for fish, "ichthus". As printing developed it was done by hand type setting and was very expensive. The early church began to use "X" as the abbreviation for Christ in religious publications. From there it moved to newspapers and other publications. "Xmas" became an accepted way of printing "Christmas". So, as we are in the Season, however you say or write it, it still has the meaning.