

## Dear Friends,

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, I'd like to call your attention to the beautiful meaning behind the word Noel, which means "birth." This word makes its appearance every year around Christmas time, and for good reason—the joyous celebration of Christ's arrival, the Savior who was born.

"Joyous Noel" is more than a festive greeting; it's a proclamation of the good news that God is with us, and through His birth, we have been offered the ultimate gift of eternal life.

### What's new?

- Just What You Needed
- It's Time Capsule Time
- Joy and Peace
- Twas The Night Before Christmas (A Fresh Perspective)

The world is longing for peace this year. As you read on, I pray that you are encouraged to proclaim to everyone who will listen that the Prince of Peace has come—and is coming again.

Wishing you and yours a Joyous Noel as we celebrate the miracle of His birth!



*Jon Jenks*

Jon Jenks | **PRESIDENT**

## Sleep in Heavenly Peace

I recently heard that some young people have decided to “skip Christmas altogether” in order to “increase peace and joy.” True, Christmas has become commercialized, materialistic, busy, and expensive. It has been reduced to just another holiday—a day off from work that promises rest, but in reality only adds to the stress and busyness of life.

This is a sad commentary for our time. Evidently for many, peace and joy are **decreased** by Christmas.

But the truth of the matter is that peace and joy are the fruit of the Spirit within and not dependent on any circumstances without.

When the heart is correctly focused, peace and joy are possible, yes, even best found and fostered, in the midst of difficult, busy, or undesirable circumstances.

Consider the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ birth for Mary and Joseph. Messy, chaotic, full of travel and expense, and pretty unpeaceful considering they were running for their lives at one point. Yet we catch glimpses of much joy and that accompanying peace as God revealed His perfect plan for this little family! “Fear not, Mary!” “Fear not, Joseph!” “My heart rejoices in Christ, my Savior,” said Mary. “I bring tidings of great joy!” declared the angel. There is peace and joy offered to us because of this day instead of stolen by this day. Let’s change our mindset—Christmas is a holy day, not a holiday.

When our heart is focused on commemorating (which is what a holy day was for) the birth of the Son of God, Christmas is experienced as a holy day. All the trimmings of the season then can cause spiritual reflection:

### Here’s Just What You Need!

A wonderful gift idea for you to consider is Dr. Peck’s Just What I Needed. This daily devotional is a much needed encouragement from God for anyone on your gift list. The book is available in the BCP store for \$10.95, and we are once again offering a bundle discount of 20% for the purchase of 10 or more books, using the discount code **rxbundle**. It is also available by calling the office at (440) 748-1677.



- **The lights:** Jesus is the Light of the world who shines bright against the dark backdrop of our world!
- **The spending on gifts:** What a great cost our salvation was to Heaven and to Jesus! How generous of the Father to send us that indescribable Gift!
- **The wrapping, giving, and unwrapping of gifts:** A picture of the sharing of the gospel with thoughtfulness and love. A gift that is to be joyfully received with great thankfulness.



### Time Capsule Reminder

2025 will mark  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way through this century! That’s pretty amazing, but so is the fact that 2025 will mark BCP’s 35th year of ministry. We plan to rehearse during the next year the different ways and works of God through this mission agency for the sake of His Church. “I will build it,” He said, and He is, and He has graciously allowed all who have been part of this Mission to have a part! Similar to gathering artifacts for a time capsule, we want to gather evidences of “the way it was” during the various times of mission life. As you pray for BCP and the Lord brings to your mind memories of any aspect of ministry, please jot down the memory before you forget it and send it on to us!



Jesus is our Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and our exceeding joy (Psalm 43:4). One of the beauties of Christmas is that it offers us peace and joy right in the midst of chaos. We sing “sleep in heavenly peace,” for Baby Jesus because we know that He was in the right place at the right time and for us!

The truth we need to remember is that we too can sleep (and celebrate) in the peace He offers this Christmas season—if we’ll only choose to.

Dr. Michael Peck has captured this renewed focus and joy on Christmas so well in his latest poem. I hope you enjoy it as much as we have around the office.

## The Night Before Christmas

'Tis the night before Christmas, and all through my house  
No creature is stirring, neither my cat nor that mouse!  
My children asleep, lovingly tucked in their beds  
With visions of Christmas gifts swirling in their heads.

I'm nearly exhausted, but with more gifts to wrap,  
I moan with a sigh, "Time for bed and my nap!"  
With my body aching and my eyes very strained,  
"Why is Christmas so hectic? Too much to do!" I complain.

The tree is all trimmed, and my chores finally finished;  
I head off to bed, my excitement is diminished.  
With a flick of the switch my room is dark and so still,  
When suddenly I stop and in my heart sense a thrill.

Through my window I look and see snow softly falling,  
In stillness and silence the Lord seems to be calling.  
"You've lost sight of Me in this special season.  
For you I came; I'm your Gift, and that's still the reason."

Then suddenly it strikes me, the sight of that manger,  
Christ came to His earth but was treated as a stranger.  
And with this sight in mind, I bend on my knee,  
"Forgive my complaining, I pray, Lord, to Thee!

I have it so good, Lord; You've blessed me indeed.  
You supplied many wants and all of my needs."  
'Tis the night before Christmas and oh what a sight,  
Falling snow, Christmas gifts and stillness tonight!

It's time now for sleep, but the joy has begun.  
To think of God's Gift and the birth of His Son.  
And there in my room as I'm ready for sleep,  
The sight of God's Gift in my heart I shall keep.

'Tis the night before Christmas and deep in my heart,  
I give Christ the place He should've had from the start.  
Through my window comes softly a sweet gentle light.  
Merry Christmas, dear friends, and to all a "good night!"

*Dr. Michael Peck*



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*connect*

Has Gone Digital!

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