



## CBC Region Three Holiday Newsletter 2025

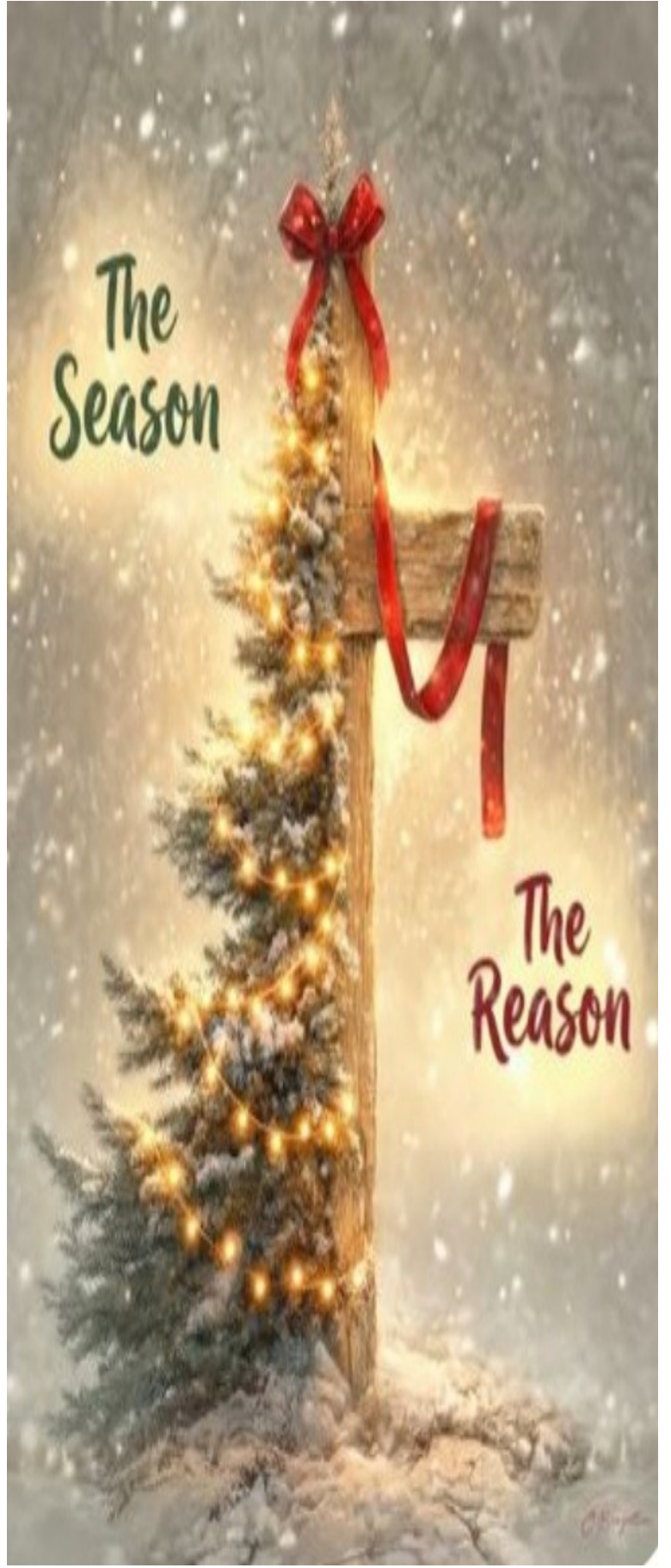
Greetings once again from the Pastor's desk.

As you are reading this newsletter, we are about to celebrate the glorious birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at Christmas and then enter into yet another New Year. Always remember that the most important and precious gift that you could ever receive or give to another is the gift of receiving and sharing the gospel of the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, who forgives us and gives us eternal life. Nothing else that we ever receive or give will last for eternity. And here are some words of inspiration for the coming New Year.

Many begin each New Year with self-reflection and intentions to improve. But in the present days that we are living in, we all need a few words of encouragement and inspiration. God tells us in Jeremiah 29:11; *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."* Many people try in the New Year to turn over a new leaf and change their lives for the better but end up right back where they started again. But God's word tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17; *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* People long for help in their many hours of need and search for inner peace. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* And as the years seem to fly by and our bodies grow gradually weaker through the years, always remember the Lord's promise to us in Isaiah 40:29-31; *"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."* And as we enter each New Year, many people impatiently want to see their life take off and they want great success and prosperity and recognition and increased wealth. But our Lord tells us in 1 Peter 5:6-7; *"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*

Merry Christmas and may God richly bless you in the New Year!

**Pastor James Braunns**



I am tired of preaching about the birth of Jesus. Have you ever gotten there? Now do not get in a huff, I am tired of little silly manger statues that look so unrealistic, everyone is smiling even the animals. After all, how many times can one man really breathe life into sermons whose titles are based on the themes from leftover bulletin covers from the back of the church secretary's office?

Why bother? Aren't those in the pews numb to the birth story anyway? Even most unbelievers know the basics of the story. Year in and year out we sing the same songs and spend countless hours preparing children's plays and practicing cantatas. Preaching the birth of Jesus can easily become just another part of the routine of doing church. Preachers and church members alike become so familiar with the birth narrative of Jesus that we fail to recall its importance in the life of Christ and the life that Christ gives. We abdicate Advent because we are too familiar with the terms. We muddle the message with a halfhearted attitude.

What we need to do is to resurrect Christmas. If we want Christmas preaching to matter, we have to preach like Christmas matters. We have to move beyond sentimentalism, holiday tradition, and stockings into proclaiming the glory of God in Christ. Before we can do that, we have to recognize the core of the problem. Preaching at Christmas becomes dull and lifeless because:

Have we become too familiar with the terms?

Are we becoming too familiar with the story?

Have we forgotten the importance of the incarnation?

Do we really convey the importance of His coming?

It has, of course, been said that familiarity breeds contempt. In this case, it breeds callousness to the message. We must preach the birth of Jesus with insight, passion, and vigor, because the very opposite of our calloused assumptions about Christmas is true. We need to preach the Christmas message with passion and vigor because: over my 38 years of being in the ministry in some form or another, I have noticed that those questions above have been asked either by myself or others. Allow me to share some thoughts.

We are so familiar with the terms that we forget the claims of the incarnation are outrageous. At Christmas we use terms like "incarnation" and "virgin birth." God becoming man is a ridiculous notion. It can only be understood by the spiritual mind. As such, we have an obligation—no, we are privileged—to stand in front of our people, visitors, friends, family, and infrequent attenders and proclaim the biblical truth that God has walked among men ... and His salvation presently beckons them to come.

There is really nothing mundane about the biblical account of the incarnation, the virgin birth, or the Christ child. Even on a literary level, this is just plain good stuff. From the claim of pregnancy with no father on the part of a betrothed girl, to an angel visiting the skeptical hurting betrothed husband to assure him, to the wise men following the signaling of an astrological phenomenon to come worship the baby, the story is filled with emotion, intrigue, plotting and scandal. Let us not forget that Herod lied to the wise men and wanted the baby killed. The story has all the makings for the next great television mini-series drama. If presented on its own terms, there is nothing here to put people to sleep.

We have the audacity to preach the quiet crashing of God into human flesh as though we were talking about a man putting his hand into a glove. Saint Augustine of Hippo wrote, *“Filling the world he lies in a manger.”* To say that God became Jesus of Nazareth is a bit like saying that Genghis Khan was an influential politician. God crashed into human history through the birth pains of a virgin girl in an obscure village near the Sea of Galilee. But do not be mistaken, in that manger the glory of the Creator of the very universe upon which the Sea of Galilee sits like an infinitesimal speck of dust on a spaceship was wrapped up in a baby boy.

The story of the incarnation is not a story. A story can be misconceived as fact or fiction. The Christmas account is a fact. In fact, it is the central theme of God’s salvation to humanity and His outworking of making Himself known to His creation. We need Christmas the way flood victims need rescue workers. Christmas is a time for celebration in an infinitely greater manner than the celebration of a dozen trapped mine workers upon being rescued after ten days in the dark.

The coming of Christ is chief among all doctrines of the Church because it is the foundation of the Church. Speaking to the disciples, Jesus said, **“on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”(Matthew 16:18b NKJV)**. The incarnation of God the Son means everything to the church. Christ’s coming means that we who are called according to His purpose through faith in the Song of God have a means of present grace, a worthwhile purpose in this life, an eternal hope, and a glorious future.

Thank God that He has given us so wondrous a salvation as this, that apart from the gift of faith we could never—would never—be able to believe it. The Gospel is the message that Jesus, a man from the little town of Nazareth who had a mother but no earthly father, is the Savior of the world? That claim is as outrageous as it is true. It is crazy. Apart from the gift of faith, it takes a fool to believe it. Yet that is how the Architect of the universe has chosen to construct the salvation of mankind.

We who are called to proclaim the truth of that message cannot allow it to become so commonplace that we lose passion for familiarity with the terms and the story. We cannot forget the importance of the incarnation or of His coming or allow the people to whom we preach to do the same.

We have to resurrect Christmas, because the power of the resurrection is only available to those who understand the incarnation.

**Donald Peters Jr**

**Regional Elder, Executive Board Member**

As many of you are already aware, this Holiday Newsletter will be my last function as Administrative Assistant with CBC Region Three. I would like to thank those of you who contributed to the newsletter in any way. I appreciate your confidence in me and have enjoyed you letting me think outside the box. May God richly bless each of you in the New Year and for many years to come. Please enjoy these pictures of the decorations from the churches that participated this season.

### Mount Pleasant CBC



### Moxham CBC



### Tire Hill CBC



*“Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days, that you would not believe, even if you were told.” Habakkuk 1:5*

As you know, December is a special month, so let us worship the God who still does wonders. He has not stopped working. He still has plans. As we look to the New Year, let our prayer be the same as Habakkuk 3:2, which says:

*“Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known.”*

Do not limit God to what He has done in the past; He delights to do new things. This upcoming year, expect Him to do so. In Isaiah 43:18-21, He tells us:

*“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor Me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, My chosen, to the people I formed for Myself that they may proclaim My praise.”*

Did you get that? He formed you for Himself so you may praise Him! Oh, put the past behind you and walk with Him. If you have been walking in a weary place, let Him lead you beside still waters. If your way has been rocky, let Him make the rough places smooth. If this past year has been one of your most blessed, do not think He has run out of good gifts! Lay the New Year before Him and say “Not my will, but Thine. Read Matthew 6:9-12. Yes, I know we pray this every Sunday. Pray the Lord’s Prayer aloud, meaning every word. Ask the Lord to let His will be done on earth and in your life. Ask Him to meet your needs this New Year and to protect you and your family from temptation and to deliver you through trials. Thank Him for His faithfulness and praise Him for the wonderful works He has done, as well as those He is yet to do. Before the clock strikes twelve on New Years Eve, gather together with friends, family, or church family to pray for the coming year and for each other. Let each person thank God for something He has done in the past and pray for one specific thing about the year to come. Remember prayer is powerful.

*Pray without ceasing. 1 Thess 5:17*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

GOD BLESS.

**Happy New Year  
2026**