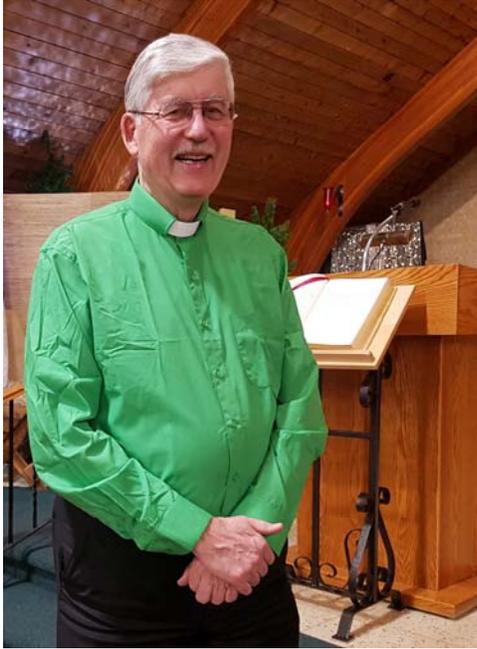




*Sharing God's gifts,  
Serving others,  
In Christ's Love*

## **Christmas Message from Our Pastor**



To the surprise of some Catholics and probably many other Christians, Christmas is NOT the most important commemoration in the Church calendar. That honour belongs to Easter and the celebration of Christ's resurrection. And yet there is certain universality to Christmas which exceeds even that of Easter. More specifically, somehow Christmas is acknowledged one way or another by religious and non-religious people alike. Perhaps to the chagrin of those of us who retain the original meaning of the season - the birth of the Messiah, others have merely regarded it as a holiday season, a family time, and a gift sharing opportunity. So, while believers may lament the crass commercialization that often overlays this religious event, yet in another way, it has precipitated a generosity and sense of well-being even in a highly secularized world. Though the 'Reason for the Season' may escape many in our pluralistic society, yet God is still able to penetrate the minds and hearts of even non-believers, awakening within them a yearning for peace and goodwill in our world. That deeper message somehow manages to emerge and remind humanity of what our ultimate call is all about. It's that kind of universal appeal that grabs the heart of every man, woman, and child no matter what their background. No one is excluded from this 'birthday party'. Our dream, of course, is that one day all will recognize and give thanks to the One Who gave us the 'party' in the first place.

May the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace bring us another step closer to the unity and harmony that God desires for all His children.

A blessed Christmas and peace-filled New Year to all of you.

Fr. John Weckend

# Archbishop's Christmas Message 2017

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings of peace and joy to you, in the Christ Child who is born among us.

Years ago, living and working in Rome, I had the chance to visit Naples, and a particular district in Naples where they make and sell beautiful handmade nativity scenes. The most interesting thing to discover was that the charming little buildings housing the manger and neighbourhood all resembled their own humble dwellings. They were depicting Jesus being born into their reality.



It is a beautiful thing to note how Christian communities in different places around the world, with very different cultures, have produced nativity scenes and characters that depict what a birth in very humble circumstances would look like for them. This isn't the self-centredness of each culture on display, but rather, a profound insight: that Jesus, who was born at one particular place and time, does indeed come to all of us, comes to seek us all out, just like the good shepherd that Jesus would go on to speak about.



This is the story of how our God, who created such an incredibly vast universe, who created the human condition in all its startling complexity, its potential for chaos and for greatness, decided and chose to do something more amazing still: to become a part of that creation. In the words of Pope Francis, God in Jesus chooses to mix himself up with us in the journey of life, to attach his life to ours, to become small. In his ministry, Jesus would say to the Father, "you have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to little ones" (Mt. 11:25). But God doesn't just reveal himself to little ones, God in Jesus *becomes* little, small enough to be held in the palms of our hands. God does this, Pope Francis suggests, to speak to our hearts in a language we can understand. Like a loving parent, "it seems that our God wants to sing us a lullaby." And in the great tenderness of God, which Pope Francis says is "God's defining trait", we in turn, through Mary and Joseph, sing a lullaby to God.

It is right and good that every culture around the world where this message is heard should come to find their own ways to celebrate and be filled with amazement and joy. God comes to us as and where we are. And we do well to ask: If Jesus was born in our world, today, where would he come? Would we recognize him? How should we depict Jesus' birth? Where should we look for him? Where will he find us?

If God comes to us in hiddenness and poverty, in smallness and vulnerability, we do well, friends, to look for him there: in the refugee child, in the sister who has suffered abuse, in the brother who feels abandoned, in the young person who feels marginalized, in the people who feel pushed aside. And we do well to go out especially to those who we ourselves have wounded, to those that our church, or our community or our society, have wounded and marginalized. Let's go and seek out the Christ there. And lastly, let's not overlook our own vulnerability, our own wounds. For the Lord comes even there, even unto us *there*, is born a saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

*Christ is born! Come let us adore Him!*

Yours in the Christ Child,

✠Donald Bolen  
Archbishop of Regina