



A Christmas Greeting from Bishop Pile, the Staff, Officers, and Council of the Allegheny Synod

What are you getting **for** Christmas? It is a question being posed this time of the year. Yes with children perhaps most frequently, but if the truth be told we all have moments wondering what our family and friends may be getting **for** us this Christmas.

As intriguing as that question is, we would suggest, there is another question that is even more thought-provoking in this chaotic time of the year ... what are you getting **from** Christmas?

Far too often we observe this special season of the year waiting **for** something gift-wrapped to give the season meaning and significance; when in fact what makes this season so profound and meaningful is who is coming and what we get **from** Him.

Announces the prophet Isaiah ...

“... a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
Authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore. [Isaiah 9:6-7]

Yes, Christmas is God giving the world this child about whom Isaiah prophecies. It is a gift that saves us from ourselves, and in fact keeps on giving. It is Jesus, born for us, who comes not just to brighten our lives for a few days at the end of December, but to transform our lives forever!

So no matter how difficult or challenging your present life may be; no matter whether this season seems less than festive because of your personal circumstances; no matter that this holly, jolly season may feel empty and meaningless, it is **from** Christmas that we get God's gift of hope and new life in the Christ Child wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger ... for us.

So ... of course, we expect you will get some gifts **for** Christmas. But also our prayer is that you are refreshed, revived, and renewed this year by what you get **from** Christmas! Merry Christmas!