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God's shining peace intrudes upon us

BY THE REV. MIKE MAGEE, M.D. • DECEMBER 13, 2008

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Message Of The Week

Christmas is a time to reflect on God's peace.

In *Mark* 1:1-8, John the Baptizer suggests before we can make room in the inns of our hearts for God's peace, we first must change.

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ALL THIS? FROM D's?

Yes. And yes.

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Eat Upstream.

Someone was once observed turning over rocks while on a hiking trip. When asked why, she said, "Because I want to make a difference, but will never pass this way again. I turn over rocks so this path is different, because I passed here."

What rocks do we need to turn over so we can make a difference? So we can make room for God's birth in the internal manglers of our lives? So we can make room for God's peace?

In the opening sentences of the *Gospel of Mark*, John the Baptizer calls the nation of Judea to repent. John's voice cries out across the wilderness, and across the centuries, calling all of us, you and me, to repent. Repent not just for things we have done, but also for things we have

left undone. To repent means to change both our hearts and our behavior. And when we repent, we finally make room for God's peace.

It is proposed the proclamation of John the Baptizer influenced Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Ebenezer Scrooge sees no benefit in being generous. But it is not only his money Scrooge withholds. He also withholds love, kindness, warmth and friendship. One night Scrooge sees himself through the eyes of others, and is transformed. He changes from cold and indifferent to generous and compassionate. *A Christmas Carol* provides us with the hope that we too can make changes in our lives. We too can change.

Every Sunday morning, the people of a particular church, maybe yours, say, "Peace be with you." They begin the worship service with a hymn of praise. The congregation members confess their sins together, and hear of God's forgiveness. Then they are invited to turn to others around them and pass the peace. It is an exhilarating moment during an otherwise contemplative occasion. Friends leave their pews to embrace one another. Newcomers are warmly welcomed with a kind word and a warm handshake. A visitor tells the pastor, "The passing of the peace feels like an invasion of my privacy." The pastor says, "When you come to church, to some extent, you give up some of your privacy. For we believe in a God who will never leave us alone. You never know when God will intrude upon you with a Word of peace."

May the peace of God intrude upon you this Christmas.

In Your Voice

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windbender wrote:

Replying to SteveSimms:

Repent, the forgotten message of the 21st Century, has been replaced with the demand for the public approval and toleration of sin.

It might be worth remembering that, at the close of the Second World War, General McArthur observed; "In order for liberty to flourish, justice and tolerance must prevail."



The Rev. Mike Magee

BRENTWOOD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Rev. Mike Magee is the pastor of Brentwood First Presbyterian Church, and practices medical oncology at Baptist Hospital. Brentwood First's youth-led worship service is this Sunday at 9:30, and will be followed by a multimedia presentation on the Bethlehem Star. All are invited. Brentwood First is at 1301 Franklin Road, a half-mile south of Concord Road, and at www.brentwoodfirstpresbyterian.org.

The church is at 1301 Franklin Road, a half-mile south of Concord Road
Brentwood, TN 37027
615-377-6295
www.brentwoodfirstpresbyterian.org.

Special service: Brentwood First's youth-led worship service is Sunday at 9:30 a.m., followed by multimedia presentation on the Bethlehem Star.

Regular services: Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

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