

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Scripture: Isaiah 52:7-10

Saturday, December 22, 2018

"Two shopping days until Christmas." When I was growing up the front page of our local newspapers each day from the day after Thanksgiving until Christmas Eve displayed a box containing such a countdown. Since our school allowed us to play card games during recess as long as we didn't use traditional playing cards with suits of hearts, diamonds, clubs, and spades because of their association with gambling, my friends and I would clip each day's "shopping days until Christmas" reminders and glue them to 3x5 index cards to make our own homemade decks of cards, with our suits being the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Mansfield News-Journal, the Sandusky Register, and the Toledo Blade, the names of the newspapers to which our parents subscribed.

Eventually, with the demise of the "blue laws" that banned Sunday shopping, the "shopping days until Christmas" reminders were replaced by merely "days until Christmas" reminders but our practice of making homemade playing cards continued.

Meanwhile in the 1950s and 1960s Christmas shoppers were surrounded by recorded Christmas carols, vocal versions with the words included. Now in the 2010s Christmas carols may have been replaced in many stores by "songs of the season" such as "All I Want for Christmas is You" and "Grandma Got Run over by a Reindeer". There is still a recognition in our culture that this is a special time of the year linked in some way to the mysterious birth of a baby whose birth was announced by angels, a star, who was visited by shepherds and astrologers.

We as Christians are blessed to be those who are keepers of the "reason for the season" and to be those who have "beautiful feet" as we bring good news and good tidings. We are to proclaim the message of peace and salvation.

In Romans 10, Paul quotes from today's reading from Isaiah 52 and reminds us from a post-Christmas, post-Easter perspective of the importance of this task in Advent and at all times.

Prayer: O GOD, we pray for willingness, courage, and wisdom to share the significance of Advent with others during this holy season, In the name of your Son, the "reason for the season," we pray. Amen.

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