

"Do not be afraid: for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all people." Luke 2:10

Christmas 2025

Dear Parishioners:

And in a blink of an eye, I am now writing my 3rd Christmas letter to all of my parishioners at St Joseph in Conway. It is hard to believe that another Christmas is upon us. This is my 69th Christmas on this earth.

Like many of you, my holiday season from Thanksgiving through New Year's is a busy season full of activities, family visits, and seasonal celebrations. For many of us it may be hard to hear the whisper of the angel who says to us, *"I proclaim good news to you."* My prayer is that during these Christmas days, you find the time not only to listen to the angel's voice, but to rejoice in the message it brings.

It has been my privilege to be your pastor now for 2 ½ years. How blessed I am to have shared this wonderful time of the year with all of you. I rejoice that the Lord has given me the opportunity to serve you. I pray that your Christmas brings the same joy the shepherds experienced that first Christmas when they saw heavenly hosts giving glory to God. May you be filled with the same joy and the same peace!

As a way to express my joy of being your pastor, this Christmas I will reveal my second phase of decorations in the church. There is still one more phase in 2026, but know that I share it with you with much joy and thanksgiving for the gift of each one of you.

I look forward to the New Year and to what it will bring. We will continue with our Capital Campaign throughout this year. I will also form two committees later in 2026. The first is to help prepare for our 150th parish Anniversary in early 2029. The second committee will help me determine how to renovate the main church to bring it into the 21st century. I do have some news for the beginning of 2026. Like last year, Deacon Duwan Booker, a transitional deacon for our diocese will be assigned to St Joseph starting in early January until his priestly ordination in May. This vocational synthesis period is a time for him to adjust to priestly life and our schedules. Please welcome him when you see him next month. There will be other pastoral changes coming later in the year, but know that I will be with you throughout 2026.

Every Christmas each of us have the opportunity to form new memories and traditions. It also gives each of us another chance to come to know this Jesus who is still present among us. I pray that 2026 brings not only 'good news' for all of us, but good health, happiness and joy!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Father John