

Pastor's Point

It's not Christmas until you've had the *Bonanza: Christmas on the Ponderosa* album playing on repeat for a couple days.

It's not Christmas until you've watched Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney croon about "count[ing] your blessings instead of sheep."

It's not Christmas until you've been to several different open houses and hosted your own.

Until you've wrapped the last package and tied the last bow.

Until you've made fun of the sappy Maxwell House commercials and wondered how Grandma failed to see a huge reindeer coming toward her.

It's not Christmas until the children have marched down the aisle in bathrobes and angel wings.

Until the the two-year-old shepherds have had a sword fight with their staffs while the pastor looks on wondering who thought it was a good idea to give the shepherds staffs.

It's not Christmas until you've sung Silent Night surrounded by your faith community,
candles — real candles —
Lit and held aloft for the final verse.

Until you've heard all nine lessons and sung the first verse of the carols in between.
Until you've shaken hands in that Body of Christ,
The words "Merry Christmas" tumbling
Out of mouths around you.

It's not Christmas.
At least not in any form we recognize.

And yet, Mary and Joseph will still go to Bethlehem.
And she will still labor among the animals,
Giving birth to God-with-us
And placing him in the manger.

And the star will still shine, and the
Wisemen will still come bearing gifts.
And we will remember that celebrating — even in new ways —
Is Holy.

Blessings for the Season,
Pastor Heather