



Letter #52 Church Family email 22/12/2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” [Isaiah 9:2]

The Tier 4 announcement and the new coronavirus variant have plunged us all into difficulties. Many of us will have had to change Christmas plans and are struggling with a renewed sense of disappointment and anxiety. Though hardly the circumstances any of us would have wished for, nevertheless that backdrop of ‘deep darkness’ may actually help us to appreciate the relevance of the Christmas story in more profound ways. When life is good and there’s lots of sparkle and joy the Christmas story can become just a lovely ‘bolt-on’, reinforcing our materialism. But when life has become dark, dangerous and full of despair, we begin to see how the Christmas story is the only light available, lighting up the wisdom and glory of God’s wonderful plan focusing on the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The truth is that amid the darkness there is light, and its source is the Lord Jesus.

Plans for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Sunday 27 December and Sunday 3 January:

We have taken the difficult decision to do everything online. We have consulted carefully and widely and though we are permitted to open the Church for services we have regretfully come to the conclusion that we should not do so given the alarming level of Covid cases in the locality and the enormous pressure facing the NHS. Given that we can celebrate and proclaim the wonderful good news of the coming of the Lord Jesus online in a way which does not put anyone at risk we believe that this is the path we should take over the next few weeks. This will be a disappointment to some who had already reserved seats at our Christmas services, but I trust that you will understand.

You can join us online on the following occasions:

- **Christmas Eve @ 2:30pm** [a Christingle service especially suitable for children – join the fun by getting [your ingredients ready beforehand](#)]
- **Christmas Eve @ 8pm** [a short 30 minute Carol Service in place of the Midnight Communion]
- **Christmas Day @ 10am** from St Nicholas
- **Christmas Day @10am** from Lady Boswell’s
- Sunday 27 December @ 10am from St Nicholas
- Sunday 27 December @ 10am from Lady Boswell’s
- Sunday 27 December @ 6:30pm on Zoom
- Sunday 3 January @ 10am from St Nicholas
- Sunday 3 January @ 10am from Lady Boswell’s
- Sunday 3 January @ 6:30pm on Zoom



To access all our services, [go to the website here](#).

On Sundays, our services are followed by Zoom Virtual Coffees:

11:15am: Joint virtual coffee for 9am & 11am congregations can be [accessed by clicking here](#).

Details are:

Meeting ID: 966 9664 8329

Passcode: coffee

4pm: Virtual coffee for Lady Boswell's congregation can be [accessed by clicking here](#).

Details are:

Meeting ID: 869 8736 1577

Supporting one another

Alongside our decision to move services online we are very aware that there are many, both within our church family but also within the wider community, who will be really struggling this Christmas. It may be that they find themselves on their own or perhaps simply coping with the burden of difficult circumstances. There are two messages which I would want to share.

- **Let's support one another within the church family**

It would be wonderful if within our Church Family we were each actively supporting one another especially on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Could you get in touch with someone in your Home Group or Bible Study Group? Could you contact someone within your congregation? In addition to our personal offers of assistance and encouragement:

Matt Taylor and the 11am Leadership team are hosting an evening for everyone on **Zoom at 8pm Wednesday 23 December** to reflect on a song released earlier this year "O Come, All you Unfaithful...", listen to a short talk by Glen Scrivener and to have an opportunity to pray into this dark situation. [Click here to access](#). Details are: Meeting ID: 948 7102 6023, Passcode: hope

Sue and I will be [hosting a Zoom call](#) on **Christmas Day 2pm to 3pm** to meet up and enjoy each other's company – please join us! Details are:

Meeting ID: 896 2559 6098, Passcode: 427176

- **Let's support others within the community**

It would be wonderful if we could reach out to those around us in our neighbourhood or friendship groups. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Could I ring a neighbour to see how they are and what they need?
2. Could I use [the 'letter box card'](#) on my street to offer friendship and help over Christmas?
3. Could I pass on details of one of [the Christmas services](#) to point them to the only true hope in these dark days, the Lord Jesus Christ?

Reach

Nurture

Equip

Send

To know Jesus and make Him known locally and globally



Hope Explored

Hope is a wonderful thing, even a necessary thing...but few things are more crushing then when our hopes are disappointed. A reliable hope needs to be based on truth, deliver on its promise, and have a lasting effect. Our Hope Explored mini-series is all about discovering the hope Jesus offers. Over Zoom you will have the opportunity to ask any question you would like or just listen along to where the conversation goes. To receive a Zoom Invitation for Monday nights in January [please register here](#) and please consider who you could invite.

Finally, a song and a prayer

The song is '[O little town of Bethlehem](#)' from King's College Cambridge which includes the lines "Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light"

The prayer is the Collect for Christmas Night:

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, to see the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Warmly in Christ,

Angus MacLeay

To access the links in today's letter, please use the details below:

Click here	Christingle ingredient list
Click here	Information about Christmas services
Click here	To join the after-service Zoom coffee for St Nicholas @9 & 11 congregations
Click here	To join the after-service Zoom coffee for St Nicholas @Lady Boswells
Click here	To join Matt & the 11am Leadership team for "O Come, All you Unfaithful..."
Click here	To join Angus & Sue on Christmas Day to meet up
Click here	For the Letter box card
Click here	For information of Christmas services to share
Click here	To register for the Hope Explored course
Click here	To listen to 'O little town of Bethlehem'