 

Abington Pastoral Letter No.36     25.12.2020 Christmas Edition

Dear Friends

**Christmas Message**

Here we are on the Christmas Morning of 2020! What a year it has been. You may wonder where good news is to be found as you look around this Christmas morning. I feel like we really need some Christmas message for this Christmas. We need someone to tell us about the baby in the manger. How God came once and he is coming again. We need someone to point us where to look to find Christmas. We are looking for hope, for the light to guide us. We are looking for healing. We are all looking for something.

If you feel this way, then it might give some comfort to know that the very first Christmas was also marked by lookers. 2000 years ago. The world was in turmoil ravaged by war, poverty and disease. Israel was occupied by Romans by force. Many believed that the world was coming to an end one way or another. Some went out to a desert, living a self-chosen isolated life. Some just caved in in fear and despair. And there he was. Joseph, looking for a lodging for his pregnant wife; Mary, looking into the face of her new born baby; Angels, looking from above; Shepherds, looking for the birthplace; And wise men, looking for the star. The very first Christmas was marked by these lookers who heard the message from God; who believed that somehow in the midst of this chaos and mess, God was leading them to somewhere with a purpose. They had no idea what was going to happen in the future, but they believed that things were going to be different.

Friends, Christian faith teaches us that history is on a timeline. There are other thoughts that say history is in an endless circle or that there is no purpose or destination in history; that history is heading to nowhere; that we just happened to be here by chance. But no. Christian faith very clearly teaches us that history is a timeline with a clear destination and a purpose.

Perhaps you may have heard the story of the flight that leads to nowhere. Qantas Airlines of Australia called it the fastest selling flight in history. It was sold out in 10 minutes. It cost about 2600 pounds for the first class seats and 580 pounds for the cheapest seats. And what does the passenger get on that flight? You get seven hours in a Qantas plane circling Australia landing where you began. It’s known as the flight to nowhere. People were so tired of being at home and going nowhere, there were willing to spend thousands of pounds to go nowhere. Would you like to spend a couple of thousand pounds to go nowhere?

That’s not what our faith is about. We are not getting nowhere. Embedded deep into the heart of the scriptures is this promise; that we end up in a better place than we began. We are not on a plane that leads to nowhere. Our flight has a clear destination, mission and a purpose. And until we get to that final destination, we have a job to do here on earth. You are here for a reason. God specifically chose you for these times.

Throughout the year we have seen some distressing scenes. People are masked; people digging mass graves; a refrigerator truck in front of a hospital because there weren’t enough space to keep the bodies; more than a thousand lorries queuing up in a single file on a motor way; the cruel knee of the neck, the injustice. It is natural to feel saddened by all this.

However we must not take what we have got for granted. Because when we look at history we can see how far we have come. Yes, there are still difficult issues but when we look at those times of slavery or times of the black death, or times of Roman Empire when Christians were crucified, our world is much more equal, more tolerant and safer place. And it didn’t happen automatically. It took people who looked and who listened. People like Joseph and Mary. People like the shepherds and the wise men. People like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. People like St. Peter and St. Paul. People like Dr. Albert Schweitzer and Captain Tom Moore.

The master of the universe and the king of kings is unfolding the history according to his vision and his promise and he chose you and me for this specific time to help people to see that the light still is shining in the darkness, to remind them that there is hope, to tell them that God is with them.

Did you know that more people took their lives in japan last month than lost their lives to Covid? The world is suffering. And the pandemic is still raging. But in the midst of it all, God has a body of people. God has his people. God has a people who are lifting their eyes toward heaven; who are bending their knees before heaven; who are opening their scriptures and softening their hearts to listen to his word; who are refusing to throw in the towel; who are refusing to give up; who believes that God is still at work even in the midst of this darkness. The God who changed the world through the ordinary people like Mary and Josephn, the God who started his work of great salvation from a naked, vulnerable baby in a manger, is the same God who is in you today. He is beside you, above you, for you. He is in you.

In the midst of all this pain and suffering, God chose you to make his love and peace known to others. You are the one who is chosen to bring Christ to this world. Just like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men. Some people ask ‘where is God? Where is his answer to all the prayers in the midst of all these challenges?’ Well. He has you. He has you and me. You are God’s plan. You are his answer to prayers. Friends, your community needs you. Your family needs you. Your school needs you. Your business needs you. Your neighbours need you. God has You positioned for such a time as this.

The world is in need for some Christmas. The world is in need for someone who believes in the good news and promise of Christmas, like you. God chose you and he is in you right now. He is whispering to you right now, let’s work together. I have a plan for you just like I had plans for Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men. Will you say yes to him please?

Let me close this message by telling you this. You are going to get through this. You and I are going to get through this together. How do I know? Because God gets his people through things. He gets them through times of slavery. He gets them through times of struggle. It is not always easy. And its seldom as quickly as we would desire. But he is going to get you through this.

Friends, thank you so much for everything you have done and is still doing for Christ's Kingdom and his Church. Thanks to your hard work, kindness and prayers, for people of Abington, this Christmas is filled with comfort, joy, light and hope despite everything going on in the world. Thank you.

May your Christmas and the New year be filled with comfort and light.

With Christmas Blessings and lots of love in Christ

Jun

P.S. I have included a few videos that we have created during this Christmas season. Each of them took tons of hours to make and tons of effort of so many people, young and old, children and friends of St. Christopher’s. If you haven’t watched it then I thoroughly recommend them to you. You may particularly find the outtakes of our Nativity Drama entertaining.

1. Abington Christingle Prayer:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyQcRfWc0Rk>

2. Abington Chain of Light:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PyUJoaHE1M>

3. Abington Nativity Drama: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRPTnYFtEfw>

4. Abington Nativity Drama Outtakes (This may make you smile :-) )

: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeaS3O3n-CA>

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