

# Wilson Memorial Church

At The HEART of the Community we serve

## CHRISTMAS 2020

### CHRISTMAS 2020: NOT YOUR 'NORMAL' CHRISTMAS

In all my years of Christian ministry I don't think I have ever heard politicians or government leaders talk as much about Christmas than they have this year. But then, 2020 has not been a normal year. The COVID-19 global pandemic has changed the lives of us all, and will continue to do so for quite some considerable time. We are thankful for the recent news about the vaccines, and we trust that they will prove to be as effective as we all hope they will be. However, in the meantime, we endeavour to live our lives as best we can, trusting that, in the words of the poet Seamus Heaney, *'if we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere.'*

This Christmas will not be 'normal'. But what actually constitutes a 'normal' Christmas? The first Christmas was far from 'normal'. Even in first century rural Palestine it wasn't 'normal' for babies to be born in hollowed out caves, or for their first bed to be an animal feeding trough. Nor was it 'normal' for such supernatural phenomena to occur, before, during, or after a child's birth. Neither of my children when they were new-born were visited by peasant workers, or members of the *'inteligencia'* bearing gifts of *gold, frankincense* and *myrrh* when they were born. Christmas wasn't 'normal' then, so why would we expect it to be normal now? In fact, that's the whole point about Christmas: nothing will ever be 'normal' again. How could it be? Christmas was intended to turn everything 'normal' on its head: to turn the world upside down. It is one of the wonderful ironies about Christmas, that what we think of as 'normal', is actually 'abnormal'. The world and its people were far from 'normal' when Jesus was born, which was why Jesus came. God's version of 'normal' is represented by the imagery of Genesis 1 and 2: a perfect world where men and women lived as equals, creation was honoured and respected, and God lived in close proximity with all that He had created. That is what constitutes 'normal' in God's eyes. But, that 'normal' was shattered by disobedience, and what was perfect became imperfect, and humanity lost its true humanity. Over time we became used to the 'abnormal', and eventually it became our 'new' normal. Jesus came to remind us of what is truly 'normal', where the *least* become the *greatest*, the *first* become the *last*, the spiritually *blind* become those who see, the *hungry are fed*, and the mark of our true humanity is revealed in how *we love one another*.

For the world, this Christmas will not be 'normal', but for those of us who love and follow Jesus, this Christmas has the potential to be our greatest yet. Stripped of all that has been accrued to it throughout the centuries, perhaps this year is the year when we see Christmas as it truly is: an invitation to embrace God's 'normal' in new and innovative ways.

### CHRISTMAS AT HOME, ONLINE AND IN-PERSON

As you will all be aware, the Scottish government, along with the UK government, has announced that certain current COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted during the period of December 23 to December 27 to allow people to visit with an extended number of family and friends. The travel restrictions will also be eased during the same period, allowing people to travel to visit family and friends in other areas of the country. This inevitably will lead to a greater number of personal contact with a greater number of people. In order to allow our Church family to engage more safely with their own families and friends during this period, the Session have made the decision to suspend all 'in-person' services during the period of December 23 to December 27. This, therefore, means that some of our regular Christmas services will either not take place, or they will happen on-line, or in your own home.



## THIS CHRISTMAS AT WILSON MEMORIAL:

### DECEMBER 20 - 10:00am and 11:00am

These services will feature solo's from Scott Kenneway and Angela Vance. These will be our last in-person services for 2020, and so let's make them fun as well as up-lifting. Don't forget to wear your Christmas jumpers/cardigans (the more hideous the better), and yes Kenneth, you can wear your Santa hat!



### DECEMBER 21 - Shine a Light in the Darkness @ 7:00pm

In place of our regular 'Blue Christmas' service, you are invited to place a light in the front window of your home in memory of someone you have lost this past year, or simply as a symbol of hope on what is the longest night of the year. The Church windows and Tower will also be lit up. You are asked to continue to light it until Christmas Day.

### DECEMBER 22 - '*I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.*'

We have been blessed to be able to keep our Food Bank open during the entire COVID-19 crisis. We have provided much-needed food to vulnerable families and individuals, and we have seen a sharp increase in the numbers of people in need. On Tuesday, December 22 we will be providing our clients with a 'double' blessing of food to help tide them over the Christmas and New period, in addition to a Christmas 'goodie' bag, filled with lots of treats and gifts to help brighten up what for many will be a very gloomy Christmas. We are incredibly grateful to our amazing team of volunteers, and to the countless number of people who have contributed food and monetary gifts this year. The Food Bank has quite literally spilled out into every corner of our Church, which is a wonderful sign of God's amazing abundance.

### DECEMBER 24 - Carols and Lessons - ZOOM

We have moved our Carols and Lessons Service online this year, owing to the fact that congregational singing is not yet allowed. Rev. Mike has put together an online Carols and Lessons Service, which he will present via ZOOM on **Christmas Eve @ 7:00pm**. An email link to the service will be emailed out to everyone on our email list. If you have family or friends visiting on Christmas Eve invite them to join us.

### DECEMBER 25 - Christmas Church Family - ZOOM

Rev. Mike will host a *Cuppa and Chat* gathering via ZOOM on Christmas morning @ 10:00am. There will be a short *devotional* for Christmas day, and lots of fun and chat. Rev. Mike will send out an email link. If you have family and friends visiting with you on Christmas morning, invite them to join us.



### DECEMBER 27 - No In-Person Service

There will be **NO** services at the Church that Sunday, but Rev. Mike will provide a short video service on YouTube. The next in-person services at the Church will be on Sunday, January 3, 2021 at 10:00am and 11:00am.

**THIS CHRISTMAS MAY YOU BE FILLED WITH THE WONDER OF MARY,  
THE OBEDIENCE OF JOSEPH, THE JOY OF THE ANGELS, THE  
EAGERNESS OF THE SHEPHERDS, THE DETERMINATION OF THE  
MAGI, AND THE PEACE OF THE CHRIST CHILD.**

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