

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT HOLBURN WEST CHURCH AND ONLINE DECEMBER 2020

Letter from the Minister, December 2020

Dear Members, Friends, Parishioners, Enquirers,

As I write, there are different events and updates in the news, some which evoke concern and a sense of foreboding, and others which energise hope and expectation. A Brexit with no deal between the UK and the European Union being reached, an increase of the transmission of the Covid virus in parts the UK, the easing of restrictions over Christmas, the likely increase in Covid cases following that. The beginning of the roll out of the vaccination process and how that will lead to greater freedom and opportunities at so many levels. I don't want to come over as a gloomy pessimist such as the television icon of a Church of Scotland minister the Rev I.M. Jolly, but neither do I want to come over as a glib, escapist type optimist. There are reasons for concern and there are reasons to be cheerful.

Yesterday evening I put up our Christmas tree in the lounge. Like many others, we have felt a greater need to put up a Christmas tree, put on the lights to bring some cheer and colour. I have found it warm and comforting to see the Christmas tree lights through the windows of houses as I pass them by. Light is such a strong symbol of hope amidst the darkness of winter either literally or metaphorically.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.  
All things came into being through him,  
and without him not one thing came into being.  
What has come into being in him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it.  
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.  
(John 1: 1 – 5, 9)*

“Light” is a prevalent theme in the Good News of the Christian proclamation. “Light” figures prominently in Advent and Christmas. Many churches have Advent wreaths, adorned with greenery and candles. Each of the four red candles are lit successively on the four Sundays of Advent, relating to different themes: the promise that Jesus will come again, the prophets, John the Baptist and Mary the mother of Jesus. The white candle, representing Jesus as the Light of the world, is lit on Christmas Day.

On Christmas Eve, at Holburn West Church, for many years now, we have had a Christingle service. The tradition of Christingles was introduced in 1747 and popularised in the UK as a fundraising idea for The Children's Society. Now, Christingle services are widely practised. The tradition involves an orange, representing the world; a candle, representing Christ as the light of the world; a red ribbon wrapped around the orange, representing the blood of Christ and his costly love embracing the world; the dried fruits or sweets on cocktail sticks

pushed into the orange, representing the fruits of the earth and the four seasons or the fruit of the Spirit or the wounds of Christ. Suffering Love and the Light of Hope are expressed.

“This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine”, so the hymn goes. When we light a candle, literally, or by a positive thought and action, we create, share and acknowledge a little bit of light. It is fragile light, a “little light of mine” that shines in the darkness, to add to all the other lights and to join with the overwhelming greater light of Christ.

Lighting a candle points to both mortality and eternity. The candles we light, will at some point burn out. In the play “Macbeth” by William Shakespeare, the symbol is used to reflect that. “Out, out, brief candle! Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more” (Act 5, Scene 5) The poet John Donne regards our mortal death as a moving on to the Eternal Resurrection Light. In that place, there are no hopes nor fears, nothing to worry about and therefore nothing to hope for either; there is no need for hope when perfect love has cast out fear. The place where that will happen, is the place of equal eternity in the presence of God.

May we live our lives, here and now, inspired by the Light of Eternal Life, revealed in that child born in a stable.

Happy Christmas to you and your loved ones!

God bless you  
from Rev Duncan C. Eddie

### **Advent and Christmas Events and Services at Holburn West Church 2020**

\*\*\* In the Holburn West sanctuary which you can attend or watch, live or recorded via Zoom and YouTube online

\*\* online live and recorded

\* online live only

#### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

10.30 am Third Sunday of Advent

The Magnificat

Led by Rev Duncan Eddie

5.20 pm Informal Chat via Zoom with folks from Jubilee

6.00pm Evening Worship “Longing for Light and Keeping Hope”

Led by Rev Diane Hobson

City Centre and West End Churches Joint Service on YouTube

Featuring the “Star Carol” sung by a Joint Choir

(A virtual choir with members of the Queen’s Cross and Holburn West choirs)

**7.30 pm Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December** [https://youtu.be/\\_x3Q\\_vwx-r0](https://youtu.be/_x3Q_vwx-r0)

Carols and lessons, Organ recitals  
with Holburn West Organist Jamie Campbell

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

10.30 am Fourth Sunday of Advent

“The Calling of Mary”

Including a Lego Nativity video prepared by the Junior Church

5.20 pm Informal Chat via Zoom with folks from Jubilee

6.00 pm Evening Worship led by Rev Duncan Eddie

City Centre and West End Churches Joint Service on YouTube

Prepared and led by the young folk from the above churches

**Christmas Eve Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December** <https://youtu.be/MkAaXYtGv7Q>

6.30 pm “Journeys in the Christmas Story”

with online presentations from several households

Fun, laughter, carols and Good News. Make your own Christingle to light at home

No Watchnight Service

**Christmas Day 25<sup>th</sup> December**

A recorded reflection from the Minister on YouTube

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December**

10.30 am Morning Worship

City Centre and West End Churches Joint Service on YouTube

Readings and Carols with representatives from each of the congregations

**Christmas Instant Neighbour Collection:** Wednesday 16th December from 10.30am to 11.30am on the Church forecourt. Online donations to Instant Neighbour can be made at the Instant Neighbour website: <http://www.instantneighbour.co.uk/donate/>

**Dressembler:** Our organist, Jamie, is once again taking part in Dressembler (a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)3 IRIS status in California) to raise awareness of the very real and present problem of human trafficking and slavery, and to raise funds to enable practical support for people to escape their lives as slaves. Please consider supporting Jamie and donating to this fund raising effort for Dressembler at: <https://dressembler2020.funraise.org/team/aberdream-team>

