

Dear Friends,

In our December newsletter we were looking forward to our celebrations of Christmas with a restricted but optimistic view.

Our situation now at the end of the year and looking into our New Year is altogether different. Circumstances have meant that the whole of mainland Scotland has been put into Tier 4 – with stricter regulations for “non-essential” retail outlets. New Year is going to be very bleak and restricted in our efforts to control, limit and beat the new strain of the virus.

Our hopes, raised by the vaccine becoming available, are reduced by the arrival of the new variant and our awareness that it will be some time before the vaccine reaches out to most of us in our own homes.

Thankfully the message of God coming among us with his love is “not just for Christmas Day”. That message remains available to us for every day of the year – all 364 of them – up until we are celebrating the coming of the Good News again at next Christmas.

One of the titles given to Jesus is IMMANUEL – which translates as “God is with us”. That is a good shorthand way of remembering God’s great gift to us at Christmas – of his LOVE and his PRESENCE every day of the year – wherever we are and whatever is happening to us.

More than ever we will have to be looking out for each other in these days when opportunities for meeting are going to be so limited.

Our structure of Church government means that our parish is divided into areas for which an elder is responsible. The elders are there to help in their districts and our Locum, Rev Gerald Moule is continuing his pastoral work by telephone. If you wish to contact him, his number is 01683 220667 and his email is: gmoule@hotmail.co.uk.

The website has contact details for Fiona Sloan and myself if you cannot contact anyone else.

For many years in my ministry, I quoted from a reading by Minnie Louise Haskins as a way of helping us to venture into the New Year. I think it’s even more pertinent this year. Incidentally, George VI used it in his Christmas 1939 broadcast to the Empire.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

That God is the one who revealed himself in Jesus as IMMANUEL – God is with us.

God bless and guide us in this New Year.

Stay safe.

Bill Holland

Interim Moderator