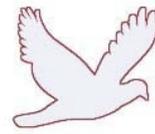




Borders Mission Circuit

Part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain



The **Methodist** Church 

Dear Friends in the Borders Mission Circuit

Message for 10th January 2021

Well, here we are again! As I write this, we are entering a new period of national lockdown as the fight against Covid-19 continues to affect each and every one of us.

I am sure that Christmas wasn't exactly what we had planned or hoped for with the imposition of harsher restrictions in an attempt to stave off the explosion of new infections that is being driven by this new variant of the virus. It would seem that when we overcome one hurdle, there's another just around the corner waiting to trip us up! At least now we can hold on to the fact that the virus has finally met its match with the onset of mass vaccinations following the tremendous efforts made by our scientists and boffins in laboratories around the world (and of course, through the bravery of those volunteers who were willing to be part of the trials to prove that these will work). We cannot forget the on-going sacrifices being made by those working in the NHS who are facing the hardships that the battle against the virus brings each and every day. For all of us, we have our part to play in making sure that we beat this thing and get some semblance of normality back into the life of the world. There are those in many parts of the world for whom the opportunity for vaccination is still a distant hope. We need to remember that we are all part of the world God created and ensure that everyone gets what is needed and as soon as they can.

As I reflect on the situation we find ourselves in at this time, I am reminded that this is very similar to the experiences of those early Israelites as they struggled with their lives as God's Chosen People in the Promised Land. After having been kept in slavery in Egypt, they emerged under Moses to endure years of wandering in the wilderness. Then, when they felt they had achieved a settled existence in the Promised Land, they were again forced to leave that which they had come to know as normal, and be exiled into a foreign land. This same scenario repeated itself always leaving the Israelites wondering just what was to become of them! And yet, despite all of this they were still the people to whom a deliverer was sent. They received their Messiah promised by the prophets for so long. God never reneged on his promise to take care of his chosen people. In fact, through Christ, that promise was extended to all people everywhere, for all time.

For us, that is a very similar situation to which we find ourselves.. Lockdown, easing of restrictions, more freedom, tiering, another lockdown, brief respite, tiering again and yet another lockdown. The future still uncertain. But that promise made by God to all of his creation, fulfilled in the giving of his son Jesus Christ, is a hope that we can still hold onto today.

Jesus declared that we would never be forsaken and that he would be with us to the end of time. It's at times like the ones we are experiencing now that help us to see a way forward; to see beyond just the next few days and weeks and to hold on to the future hope that we are promised.

We have just celebrated Christmas (perhaps in not such grand and elaborate ways as we would normally), but it happened and we were able to welcome the Christ-child into the world

as we have done for over two thousand years. With it came all the promises that the Christmas story brings – a new light shining through the darkness, a new hope through the birth of a child, the fulfilment of age-old prophecies seen again in today's world. This is what we have been given. This is what we can hold on to for the days ahead.

The future is always uncertain. None of us knows what is likely to happen tomorrow, or next week, next month, next year even. All we can do is to put trust in our God who, as he was there for the early Israelites in their time of testing, will be there by our sides through thick and thin.

God has bestowed on each of us some most wonderful gifts to use in that work to which he calls us to share. Those gifts are being used by so many people – the gift of an enquiring mind, the gift of healing hands, the gift to care for others, the gift of proclaiming the Gospel, the gift of being the Children of God. All these gifts are being used not for ourselves but because God expects us to use them for those around us.

Using such gifts has brought us to where we are today – standing on the threshold of a promise of a future where all that we have endured will be a thing for the past, and we can move forward with a new sense of hope.

In the meantime, all we can do is to hold firm to the path we have to take in the next few months, follow the rules, look after each other by staying at home, stay local and only do those things that are essential, and to care for one another through the love that God gives to us.

The next few months are going to be difficult but we can be ever hopeful for the future that lies ahead of us as we strive to share the Gospel of Christ, live in the love of God and grow the power of the Holy Spirit.

Take care, stay safe and every good blessing for the New Year ahead.

Rev. Robert.

On behalf of Rev Ann, Rev Nicola, Deacon Sam & Rev Pete.