



ALLANDER EVANGELICAL CHURCH

FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

14th December, 2020

The Providential Census: Luke 2: 1 - 7

The old-fashioned concept of Providence means that God not only sees ahead but also uses it to fulfil His own purposes. Nowhere is that more evident than in this incident around the birth of Jesus. Several features emerge from that story.

It reveals the human craving for power, honour and acclaim. Caesar Augustus called this census, not so much for taxation purposes, as to draw attention to himself and his glory as the "father of the fatherland". Yet, at that very time, when this man was exercising his authority, God used the occasion to reveal His power in ordaining the birth of His Son.

It also reveals God's ability to fulfil his word. An angel could have conveyed a message to Joseph about going to Bethlehem but God was using human strategy to fulfil Micah's prophecy that Christ would be born in David's city.

Comforting though that is, the event also reveals that the actual fulfilling of God's will can be an uncomfortable experience for those involved in its execution. Mary accepted gladly the privation of the ordeal. In the balance we have heard mentioned so often recently of the paradoxical combination of God's initiative and human action it can be a challenging task for us to obey.

Yet, at the end of the day, it reveals who really should be worshipped and acknowledged as Lord. While Caesar Augustus and others of his ilk have gone, Jesus, Son of God and Saviour, endures and, He alone, is "worthy to be praised".

This week

This looks like being a busy week for us in the church. In addition to the Prayer meeting on Tuesday and Prayer times on Wednesday and Friday mornings at 10.00 am, we have:

A Zoom meeting in lieu of an **Annual General Meeting** for members on Thursday 17th December at 7.30pm. An Agenda and papers have been circulated.

Friday, December 18th is being set aside as a **Day of Prayer** giving people the opportunity to focus on the country and the world from their own homes and in their own time. The objective is that on the same day we come and pray in line with the outline which is circulated with this Newsletter.

That will be followed on Saturday 19th December (not Friday 18th as previously intimated) at 7.30pm with a **Fellowship Evening** on Zoom. This is an opportunity to share together our experiences of the goodness of God over the year and also the help He has given throughout this pandemic. Zoom affords us the facility for each to contribute (Bible Study attendees will have had good practice!). Please be in prayer and reflect on what the year has been for you – blessings or challenges - and join in to share that with others. As 1 Peter 3: 15 says: "*Be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you*".

Zoom access is the same as for the Prayer Meeting (Meeting ID: 819 2022 9424; Passcode: 047533) and is also available by phone by ringing 0131 460 1169

Children's Online Service

The first four online sessions have gone very well with some encouraging responses from children (and their parents) who have been watching and taking part. This Wednesday is the last one of this series but a new series leading up to Easter is being envisaged, DV.

Christmas Eve Service

Within the current restrictions it will be possible for us to gather together in the church building for a **Christmas Eve Service on Thursday 24th December at 7.00pm**, lasting 50 minutes. If you wish to attend, then please advise Jim Gourley by text, 0784 191 1923, or e-mail jgourley1944@outlook.com as soon as possible and not later than Sunday 20th December so that seating arrangements can be made.

Service Times

The Wednesday and Friday morning prayer sessions at 10am will not take place on Wednesday 23rd, Friday 25th, Wednesday 30th December, and Friday 1st January. The normal pattern will resume on Wednesday 6th January at 10.00am. Tuesday Prayer Meetings will take place on 22nd and 29th December and on Tuesday 5th January, 2021.

Bible Studies

The last meeting of the present series of Bible Studies took place last Thursday. A summary booklet is being made available which can be collected from the church or electronic copies sent on request. They are also available on the church website. A new series looking at whole books in the Old Testament will commence, DV, on Thursday 14th January, 2021 at 7.30pm on Zoom.

Newsletter

The Newsletter will still be published over the Christmas period. It would be good if readers could send in a Christmas / New Year greeting to share with others for inclusion in the next two issues. Either phone 956 5866 or send a wee message to howeljones@outlook.com and we'll try to include it.

John Macleod

On Friday past, 11th December, John Macleod completed 11 years as our Pastor at Allander Evangelical Church. We give thanks to God for John's ministry and for the work he has done for the Lord during this time. As he enters his twelfth year we pray that God will continue to bless his ministry and care for him, Carol, Andrew and Bethany.

Finally

One of the things that happens towards the end of a year is that the TV stations have programmes reflecting on the events of the past year. I have a feeling that these programmes will be shorter this year than usual! Let's face it, the year has been dominated by one story - Covid-19 - one event that has impacted the whole world and every area of life leaving us with a mountain of problems to be resolved. The great irony is, of course, that 2020 was meant to be the year for clearer vision based on the American measurement for perfect eyesight. Churches and businesses all started the year with conferences and teaching that this was the year for clearer - 20/20 vision. It may not be the year we hoped for, but that does not mean that this year will not be beneficial because it may be the year when many a soul got a greater vision of Christ.

AEC NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT 14th December 2020

FELLOWSHIP EVENING

We do hope that you will join with us on Saturday 19th December at 7.30pm for our Fellowship evening.

To join the evening by Zoom use the following: ID 819 2022 9424, Passcode: 047533. By Telephone, 0131 460 1196, using same ID and Passcode as above.

The evening is planned to last for about one hour and be informal with contributions welcomed from everyone. To enable you to think about what you may want to share on the evening suggestions are listed below for you to give thought to; please do not feel under any pressure to participate but we hope a number of people will.

John Macleod will open the evening followed by Manuel and Ava sharing their story with us - how they became Christians, came to Scotland and became part of us at Allander.

We will then welcome from people contributions on the following,

- What has being a Christian meant to you this year?
- What do you thank God for over this past year and today?
- How has being part of a church fellowship been of help to you this year?
- What elements or components during this time of restriction have been precious for you?
- What has been achieved for God during this year?
- What are my motives, aspirations, intentions and plans for the year ahead?
- What has this years' experience been like?
 - As individuals,
 - As a congregation,
 - As Elders.

Looking forward to our evening together.

Warmest blessings from The Elders Group.

A New Banner

After several months of proclaiming the message - Faith not Fear – the display board outside the church has a new banner with this message.

As well as being a timely message for all to see it is also a comforting word for us who believe and cherish His presence.

Immanuel - God is still with us.
Have a safe and blessed Christmas
www.allanderchurch.org.uk