



## ALLANDER EVANGELICAL CHURCH

### FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

28<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

*Be anxious for nothing, but with prayer let your requests be known to God; and the peace of God keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

#### **Pain and Comfort: Matthew 2: 13 - 18**

At a time when the happy interlude of a 'normal' - even if diminished - Christmas with family is overshadowed by the prospect of severe lockdown ahead it is interesting to note how that mirrors what happened in the nativity story.

Immediately after the birth of Jesus - the King whose star the Wise Men had followed - Joseph was warned of the threat on His life and told them to flee to Nazareth for safety. Great **pain** followed that glorious birth of a Saviour because an earthly king feared His existence and sought His end.

In the same way we are starkly reminded that Satan is intent on destroying the life of Jesus in believers and resents the kingdom being taken by Another. So, it is not uncommon for believers to encounter such pain, coming under serious attack from the enemy of souls.

But, with that pain there is also **comfort**. Jesus was protected from Satan's attack in accordance with the promises made in the OT. In a similar way we can be comforted that God is still on the throne, God's promises are sure and that this Jesus, though he was humbled, is the mighty victor over sin, Satan and death. That is comfort indeed.

#### **One2Seven Zoom sessions**

Six children responded to the activities on the Unwrapping Christmas series of #One2Seven presented on Zoom. Though a small number, it is encouraging especially as Allyson shared at the Fellowship Evening how keen the children were and how the parents joined in and expressed appreciation. Keep praying.

#### **Missions and Missionaries**

It was good to have **Inga** back in Scotland over the summer, joining us in our Prayer Times and Bible Studies on Zoom yet prevented from making face-to-face visits because of Covid. Now back in Oaxaca, she is fully immersed in detailed translation work and training others in the complex task of making God's Word accessible. At the same time she has endured more discomfort because of dental problems which, we hope, are now largely behind her.

**David and Jennifer McColl** are also back in Bolivia with the major responsibility of coordinating the Samaritan's Purse operation in difficult circumstances.

Our prayers are with them and with the other **Missionary Agencies** we have support and prayed for throughout the year.

## Prayer

With the Covid situation becoming more serious there is an increasing need to focus on prayer. We had our own prayer day on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The Faith Mission are setting aside January 11<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup> as a special week of prayer, and Scripture Union is setting January 21<sup>st</sup> for that purpose also.

And after a break over these two weeks the church will resume its additional prayer times on Wednesdays and Fridays at 10 am starting on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January.

The regular Tuesday evening prayer meeting will continue tomorrow (29<sup>th</sup>) and next Tuesday.

## Peter Martin

Our congratulations to Peter Martin Snr who celebrates his 94th birthday on 1st January. We send our best wishes, love and warmest blessings to Peter as he reaches this milestone in his life.

## Refurbishment

With a new roof in place and a splendid entrance area the church building has benefitted from the refurbishment programme over the past two years. Thanks to all concerned.

## Thank You

Even though so many of our activities have been curtailed, a lot of people have contributed willingly of their time, money, effort and concern for the work of the church. To each one, a sincere Thank You.

## This year's (lockdown) ministry

Since the lockdown we have been recipients of some powerful ministry. Do you recall some of the topics, like: Psalm 46, the raising of Lazarus, the "sing-where-I-cannot-see" of Habbakuk, the lessons from the Temple being a "house of prayer" rather than a 'den of thieves' that the people had let it become? And what of Philippians with memorable phrases like 'mind-set' or the 2 Thessalonians series with 'the pivotal place of prayer' or the recent series culminating in a reminder of "the powerful crib"? They were interspersed in the summer with a reminder that Christian life is not to be 'me-centred' but 'God centred' and with a sure hope in the 'anchors of the soul'.

In that sense we can reflect back on 2020 having enjoyed the assurance of 'Immanuel, God is still with us'.

It has been a real privilege, but with that privilege comes a responsibility also. What motif will we carry into the New Year as a guiding light? Titus puts it in a nutshell with:

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*  
*Titus 2:15*