

Chaplains Message - December '21

We sincerely hope that everyone is well and keeping good health.

Well Brethren, that's us almost at the end of another year, and just when we thought that we were at a stage where we were coping with the lifting of the restrictions we are hit with a new variant. (Omicron). We are sure we would rather cancel our meetings than be responsible for any further outbreak of this horrible virus. At least we are able to visit our relatives and enjoy Christmas together.

At this time, we get a chance to reflect on the past year and thank the Lord that we are here to do so. There will be a lot of us out there that feel there's not a lot to celebrate, particularly when we have lost a loved one, some through a particular illness, others with Covid-19.

Christmas – it's a time of wonder, magic, joy, and those warm-hearted feelings that make December 'the most wonderful time of the year' but for those of us who have lost loved ones, Christmas may be marked by grief, loneliness, doubt and fear. Traditions that used to bring joy now bring floods of tears. Crowded rooms feel lonely because someone is missing. Nothing feels the same. Our hearts echo the hymn lyrics; "O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here"

What used to be one's favourite time of year turns into a nightmare. Now it leaves some feeling guilty if they are seen to be enjoying themselves. Time is a great healer, but we can learn to celebrate both Christmas while remembering with love the good times that we all enjoyed at this time of year.

We hope and pray that you all have a Christmas you can enjoy with your relatives, friends and neighbours, making sure that you and everyone is 'Safe'.

At some point during the festivities, we hope you can spare a minute or two to remember those who are less fortunate than our selves.

We know, the majority of us get **more** pleasure giving gifts as well as receiving them, so to that end give and receive the gift of love God has given us.

Enjoy your time with your families and STAY SAFE