



Good news of great joy

Luke 2:10

Advent 2024
Fredericton NB

Dear Friends,

As I write, the celebration is already in full swing. Christmas began long before the 1st of December in the retail sector. Many houses on our street were lit inside and out for Christmas back in November. Most “Christmas” parties and concerts have already happened. It’s tempting, especially in a seasonally demanding profession, to feel burnt out even before Christmas begins. You may share those sentiments for your own reasons. If you think you might be the perfect candidate to replace Jim Carey in the next Dr. Seuss movie or would like to audition for the part of Scrooge this year, you’re probably not alone. The reality is, all of us have our reasons for not welcoming the coming of what our culture has decided is the biggest festival of the year commercially and otherwise. Rose will be facing her first Christmas without her husband. Gil needs to deal with what losing his job last July will do to Christmas at his house. Dexter will spend Christmas away from home for the first time.

The celebration of Christmas is so often tied to our past and its memories. We have the expectation that this year needs to exceed all the other Christmases put together. That’s seldom, if ever, possible. I wonder if our expectations, and those the culture places on the Season, don’t eclipse what the Christian celebration is all about.

Tradition is a wonderful gift. Christmas customs of celebration are valuable and create memories that last forever. However, tradition and custom can also cut us off from the reality of the present, and it may be there we most feel the pain. The coming of our Lord was not meant to cause pain. The message of Christmas is good news of great joy. If the celebration this year is causing you anxiety as the past squeezes you too forcefully into the uncertain future perhaps it’s time to consider again the “reason for the season.”

Jesus comes to bring the assurance that “God is with us.” God knows our pain, not because he has a good imagination but because he ‘shared our human nature.’ The Incarnation reminds us that when we cry, God cries. When we laugh, God laughs too. The true peace of Christmas has to be sought in the present not re-manufactured from the past. I’ll bet this Christmas is going to be different in your household just as it is every year and will be in mine. Recognizing the grace in the present moment will be a key to the celebration. God is with us, even though it’s just not the same this year. The true celebration of Christmas should help us along into the future, not cause us to wallow in the past or be helplessly swallowed up by it.

So celebrate “Christmas Present” this year. Discover again what Cindy Lou and all the little Whos in Who-ville already knew but needed to be reminded. It’s not about stuff. It’s not about the past. It’s all about the “presence.”

The Church will gather once again to stand as community in the light of the miracle of the Incarnation. God is with us. The schedule included should be easily posted in a convenient place or shared. If necessary, Communion where you are is as easy as a reply, a message to the Cathedral Office or to me. Have a blessed Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Hall (The Very Rev’d)
Dean of Fredericton
GMH

Give a festival
offering online

Fourth Sunday of Advent (22 December)

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (*traditional*)

10:30 a.m. (*come worship*)

4:00 p.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve (24 December)

4:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist (*contemporary / family*)

8:00 p.m. Eucharist (*come worship*)

11:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist (*traditional*)

Christmas Day (25 December)

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (*contemporary*)

First Sunday after Christmas (29 December)

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (*traditional*)

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (*contemporary*)

New Years Day (01 January 2025)

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (*contemporary*)

*Please contact the Cathedral Office (506) 450-8500
to schedule a Home Communion.*

