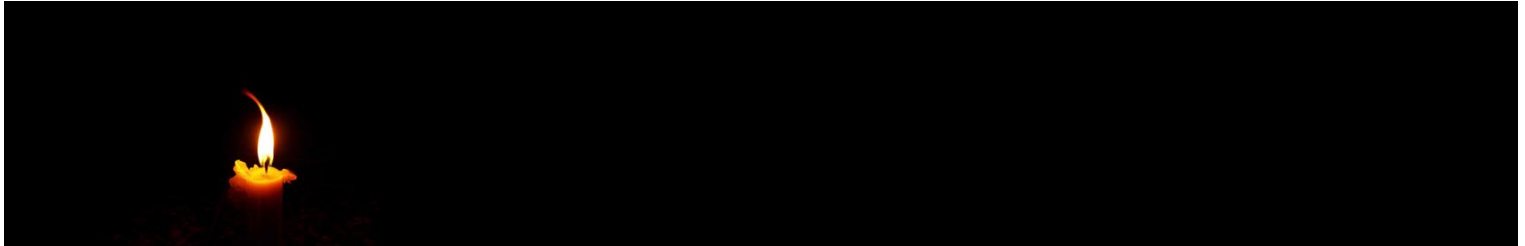




Anglican Network in Canada

Office of the Diocesan Bishop
The Right Reverend Charles Masters
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14 December 2015

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this season of Advent, as we wait longingly for God's promised Messiah, I send you love and blessings on behalf of my fellow bishops and our wives – Bishop Stephen and Nona, Bishop Trevor and Dede, Bishop Don and Trudy, Bishop Malcolm and Mary Lou, Bishop Ron and Jan, as well as Judy and myself. It is our prayer that you would fully know the peace brought by the coming of the Prince of Peace and the sure hope of His soon return.

When Jesus was born it was a time of darkness and insecurity. The darkness had almost extinguished hope. Only a few, very few, held on to that hope and were waiting and longing for the fulfilment of God's Promise. But into that darkness, God sent His promise, His Light – a tiny flicker, a seemingly insignificant baby, born to an impoverished, teenaged virgin living in a dark, hostile and insecure world.

God's Light had come at last!

And yet there was no room for Him – not just in the inn, but among His own people. The political ruler, Herod, was so determined to snuff out His life that he murdered all the little boys in and around Bethlehem – infants and toddlers; His parents had to flee, just escaping the arrival of Herod's soldiers, the very ones who should have embraced their Messiah, their long expected Light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:9-13 ESV)

"But to all who did receive him..." I love that "but"! To all who receive Jesus, John says, God gives the gift of becoming His children.

"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

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Registered Canadian Charity Number: 861 091 981 RR 0001

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ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

If you go by the evening news on TV, the darkness seems to be growing. Our world feels increasingly hostile and life is more precarious. Yet in that darkness God is at work igniting flames around the world – just don't expect to learn about it on the newscast.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:4-5, ESV)

As children of God, who have been redeemed from the darkness by Christ Jesus, we know that the Light has conquered – and is conquering – the darkness.

The ultimate victory is won already even as the battles are still being fought. As we live in God's Light, let's allow that Light to brightly shine in and through us as bold witnesses so others lost in the darkness will see and come to His Light.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3 ESV)

Dear friends, the tiny infant in Mary's womb more than 2000 years ago was and is God's answer to the darkness. Such a small, vulnerable light! And yet that tiny light defeated the darkness, then and for all eternity.

So as we feel the darkness closing in, do not despair. Run to the light, run to Jesus this Christmas. He knows all about the darkness. As we draw closer to the Light, this will be a very good Christmas and New Year.

Every blessing to you and all you love this Christmas and throughout the coming year as we await and prepare for his coming!



*Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown,
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For Thy holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee.*