

Immanuel God With Us

Christmas 2020

Dear Wesley Church family,

We all like the bright side of Christmas, the tidings of comfort and joy - the angels singing and the shepherds and magi celebrating the coming of the Christ child. But this year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I believe for most people, Christmas may not be the usual celebrative event that they look forward to. For many, it is going to be a dark Christmas. But how many of you are aware that there is a dark side to this first Christmas story? You see tucked in Matthew 2 a verse that tells us of this dark side of Christmas. *Matthew 2:18 "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."* (NIV)

This was a prophecy that Matthew quoted from the prophet Jeremiah to describe what happened in that Christmas story. We were told that King Herod wanted to kill baby Jesus because he thought Jesus was a rival to his kingship. But when he learned that baby Jesus had escaped his clutches, he was so furious that he sent out an edict and had all the boys under the age of two years old killed in Bethlehem. For those families, whose children were killed by Herod in that Christmas story, they were inconsolable. For them there would be no Christmas joy, no celebration, only sorrow and weeping. The day of the massacre was the dark side of the Christmas story. As we look at our situation today, the death of over a million people for the last six months was not the result of any man but a virus called Covid-19. Rachel is weeping again today.

Even if we are not weeping over any loved ones who have died of the Covid-19 virus, I believe many of us have been badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic that has wrecked our economy, our jobs and our lives. For many, the days and months ahead are going to be bleak as many will face the prospect of hardships as they lose their jobs or businesses. So, this Christmas will no doubt be a dark Christmas. Amid this dark and gloomy situation, where do we find hope? Praise be to God; our hope is still found in the one who had escaped death on that Christmas day 2,000 years ago. It is true that our Lord Jesus Christ was indeed rescued from King Herod in the Christmas story. But he escaped only to be crucified later under Pontius Pilate so that the rest of us might escape from eternal damnation and be reconciled with God the Father and have eternal life with him. This is the good news message of hope in our Christmas story. No matter how bad our future may be, no matter how dark our Christmas may be, we can always find comfort to know that Jesus, our Immanuel is always with us. If Jesus is with us, then there is nothing we need to fear about our future as Jesus once said in *John 16:33* "... *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*" (NIV)

So, it is with this hope in Christ that we enter this season of advent. Traditionally at our Church, this is also the time of the year where we receive a Christmas offering for the poor and needy. To those who are able, may I appeal to you to continue to give*. For those of us who are financially strapped because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I wish to assure you that it is alright for you to give whatever amount you are able to, and please do not feel burdened if you are not able to. We understand. My prayer is that as we come together and do our best to share and help the poor, God will indeed be merciful to us as well. May we also have the faith to believe the words of the Psalmist in *Psalms 37:25-26* "*I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be a blessing.*" (NIV)

So, let us persevere and fix our eyes on our Lord Jesus and trust Him. And as we do that, may the peace and hope of Christ rest and remain with all of you. Wishing all of you a blessed Christmas!



Rev Stanley Chua
Pastor-in-Charge

*Christmas Special Offering for Wesley Financial Assistance Fund (WFA)

3 Methods to give

Method #1

BY INTERNET BANKING:

Account No.
4503089518

Method #2

PAYNOW:
by UEN No.

S87CC0527E002

Scan this QR code



Method #3

By crossed cheque payable to
Wesley Methodist Church.
Mail to: 5 Fort Canning Road,
Singapore 179493
Attention: Finance

Note: For fund identification, please indicate "WFA" in the reference field when making transfer electronically or write it at the back of the cheque.

Christmas Service | 25 December 2020

[Online Streaming from 8.30am]

Link: christmas.wesleymc.org

Wesleyan Watchnight Covenant Renewal Service | 31 December 2020

[Live Stream begins at 11.00pm]

Link: watchnight.wesleymc.org

Year Of Sabbath-Rest 2021

Our church theme for 2021 is the **Year of Sabbath-Rest**. During the year we will be learning and practising the spiritual disciplines to help us rest, reflect and renew.

Read more about our Year of Sabbath-Rest 2021 in the December issue of the Wesley Tidings (wesleymc.org/wesley-tidings).

With this letter we have enclosed two copies of the **Sabbath-Rest Journal** for your family. If you require more copies, please send a request to wesleymc.org/srj-request (*while stocks last*).

A PDF version is available online: wesleymc.org/sabbath-rest-journal

