



# Growing Faith

## 02 - Winter | 18 December 2020

### Thought for the week

## Christmas is Cancelled!

Written by Mr Paul Cuff (Head of Sixth Form)

'Christmas is cancelled!' ran the headline in a tabloid newspaper last month. For a moment, you could be forgiven for thinking you had been transported back to 1647, when the then Puritan government banned the celebration of Christmas, replaced it with a day of fasting and locked many churches to prevent services. "Bah humbug!" Not much comfort and joy there then!

A disease, a pandemic or any other person or thing can never, however, ban Christmas; just as one could never ban the snow that falls on a spruce Christmas tree in a Norwegian forest. For Christmas, as we know, is not the incessant playing of Slade's "So here it is merry Christmas..." for the umpteenth time since November 1st, nor is it the turkey with all its trimmings, though that certainly helps. Yes, we can ban or cancel the superfluous 'friveries' as the poet Betjeman once called them, but nevertheless, we shall still have Christmas. And oh... how much do we need Christmas this year, a year like no other in living memory.

As humans we yearn for the warmth, the light, the comfort, the security, the hope of Christmas. In fact, we could say we are designed for Christmas. We are empty, lifeless, and directionless without it. For a created thing can never completely fill the void, the longing that lies in the heart and soul of each of us except the God made human at Christmas. And this Christmas God-child, aware of our need, rushes to help us. As Wisdom so beautifully puts it: 'down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all-powerful Word' (18:5). John's gospel echoes this theme when it speaks of the "Word" becoming flesh. In the Greek thought of the period, it meant equally the "meaning" became one of us. That is, the meaning to everything: the meaning to the existence of the universe and to the meaning of life, was born at Christmas. The meaning of the world came so close to us that we can 'touch him with our hands and see him with our eyes' (1 John 1). An incredible thought!

In spite of all that has happened this horrendous year, Christmas is not cancelled. God knows we are lost without love and solace, and Love was made visible that first Christmas night and does become so every Christmas. Yes, Christmas is very much with us, or rather, is lived among us. It is the birth of the Christ-child, the Emmanuel, the God-is-with-us in all our tribulations, bringing us hope, comfort, peace and salvation from the dark and all that threatens us.

And to that we can say a very "Happy Christmas!"



## Our School Song

Why not sing along with this as we worship together.



### Teenager's Tip

## Light at the End of the Tunnel

By Isaac Nawab, Year 9.

This last half term has been very dissimilar to others for me, in relation to our year being mandatorily put in a two-week isolation. During this period of time, I and others have managed to stay connected through the wonders of technology, we have also been able to participate in helpful live online lessons which has made it much easier to work from home in comparison to the first lockdown. Though we may not be able to see family and friends through the season of Christmas and advent season, we must remember that there is always light at the end of the tunnel, a way I have used to help relieve these anxieties is praying for all our loved ones through the days of advent.

## Song of the Week



**“But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour was revealed, he saved us. It was not because of any good deeds that we ourselves had done, but because of his own mercy that he saved us, through the Holy Spirit, who gives us new birth and new life by washing us. God poured out the Holy Spirit abundantly on us through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that by his grace we might be put right with God and come into possession of the eternal life we hope for...”**

Titus 3:4-7



## Church Services at Christmas

At **Rishton St Peter and St Paul's** there is a warm welcome to all where the Church is open daily 9am to 3pm for private prayer and devotion. On **Christmas Eve** 5pm Family Eucharist of the Nativity and 7pm Solemn Eucharist and Blessing of the Crib. On **Christmas Day** 10am Eucharist of the Nativity.

**Burnley Life Church** has a Christmas morning service online at 11am and can be found on their [website](#).

Join **St James Clitheroe** online at the following events: **Kids and Youth Extravaganza** on Friday 18th 6pm; **Christmas Carol Service** on Sunday 20th 6pm; **Christmas Day** 10am. All of these can be accessed at their [website](#).

**VISION:** Live youth events every Friday night for 11-18s at 7:30pm on Zoom. The perfect end to the week with friends, fun, and chance to chat about God, life and faith. Find out more at [here](#).

Join **St John's, Accrington** on Sunday 20th at 6.00pm for **Carols Under the Stars**; on Christmas Eve at 11.30pm for **Midnight Communion**; on Christmas Day at 9.30am for **Family Communion**

Join **St Augustine's, Huncoat** on Christmas Eve at 6.00pm for **Carols under the stars**; on Christmas Day at 10.30am for **Family Communion**

## Prayer for the Week

By Miss Ebony Harrison:

Lord, as we enter the Christmas season, we want to take time to thank You for sending Your Son to be born as a baby and to become our Saviour, so that He can bring peace into the hearts of those that believe, and joy to those that find their hope in Him.

Lord, we know that only in Him is true peace and lasting joy to be found, and as we sing the Christmas carols and choruses this Christmas season, we pray that true joy would come into the world, and that many would find their peace. In Jesus' name,

Amen.



**“I was hungry but you fed me.”**

Jesus

Earlier this term, we were overwhelmed by the generosity of our school community in response to our request for food for our food bank. Overseen by Mrs. Litherland and her eco-group this has all now been distributed. Thank you for your kindness.



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