



The West Hereford Team Ministry
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Hello everyone,

This is not the letter that anyone wanted to write - or to read. This Christmas we won't be celebrating as any of us would have wanted. I suspect that even if the announcements from the government haven't changed your Christmas plans they will have put a dampener on your Christmas spirits.

I don't know what your Christmas will look like but perhaps you are planning on indulging in a little Christmas television. I have been indulging in quite a few Christmas movies, including the timeless classic, The Muppet's Christmas Carol.

The message of so many of these movies is that Christmas isn't about the elaborate celebrations, the food, the presents or the decorations. It's about family and love and time spent together. That seems a bitter pill to swallow this year when we are so far from some of the most important parts of Christmas.

The thing that struck me watching The Muppet's Christmas Carol is that in this classic - and perhaps every Christmas movie is a re-working of Dicken's story - Scrooge doesn't just learn a lesson about Christmas Day. After being visited by the Three Spirits he vows:

'I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.

Amongst all the important lessons that Scrooge learns one of them is that the spirit of Christmas, the magic of Christmas, isn't confined to one time of year.

Perhaps this year, when so many of our Christmas expectations are turned upside down we can take some comfort from the promise of honouring Christmas all year? That we can find other chances to gather with those we love, we can feast and exchange gifts and celebrate again. There is hope for Christmas Future, even if this Christmas is a little more 'Silent Night' than 'O Come All Ye Faithful'.

As Archbishop Justin Welby said in response to the Government announcements - Christmas is "not cancelled because at the heart of Christmas is Jesus coming into the world, God coming into the world and then coming on to Easter."

The most important thing for this Christmas present is to stay safe - the Archbishop also said that those who are more vulnerable "should not feel compelled to go to church this Christmas." We will miss your presence with us but we will look forward to celebrating with you again.

Staying safe also means fending off loneliness and isolation - Can you call someone: do you need a listening ear or a friendly chat? If you find you need a chat, prayer, or some practical help then do reach out - either by phoning 01432 273086 or by contacting your Pastoral Coordinator.

We hope these resources help you feel connected as we worship as a scattered Church. Please be assured that you are not forgotten and that you are remembered in our prayers - and that we long for the day when we can meet again as the whole church in one body and one place.

Have a safe and hopeful Christmas,

Jo and Ruth.