



Anglican Network  
in Canada

*Advent*  
2017

**M**y dear friends of the Anglican Network in Canada, I want to begin by sending you and those you love Christmas greetings, in the wonderful name of Jesus, who was born for you in Bethlehem many years ago and whose glorious return is now one year closer than when I sent my last year's Christmas greetings to you.

Once again, I write on behalf of the team of bishops and their wives with whom it is my great joy and privilege to serve. Greetings from Bishop Trevor and Dede, Bishop Stephen and Nona, Bishop Don and Trudy, Bishop Ron and Jan, Bishop Malcolm and Mary Lou and now Bishop Andy and his wife Mandy, who live in England, and my wife Judy and myself. (I should also say that it was our joy to welcome Bishop William Anderson and his wife Margaret, in his retirement, to ANiC about a month ago and wish to send them special Christmas greetings at this time.)

We all rejoice in our partnership in the gospel with all of you and pray for much blessing for you and your loved ones this Christmas and throughout the coming year, 2018.

## Good News – Great Joy – To All People

I have already used the word “joy” and “rejoice” several times which is completely appropriate. When we read the accounts of the birth of Jesus, and the preaching of the gospel after that birth, the normal response to this Jesus is incredible joy and naturally people start sharing that message and that joy with others wherever they go.

## To the Shepherds

When the angels suddenly appeared on that first Christmas night they said of this Jesus: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is

born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” ( Luke 2:10,11)

When the shepherds received this message from the angels, it says they responded immediately and when they went to Bethlehem they found everything exactly as the angels had said it would be. The shepherds then rejoiced, praising and glorifying God and telling everyone they met all about Jesus. The impact was great.

“And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told to them.” (Luke 2:16-20)

## **To the Magi**

When they saw the star and found the child, it says “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” and brought the baby gifts in keeping with their joy.

“After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” (Matthew 2:9,10)

## **To the City of Samaria and the Ethiopian Court Official**

Years later when Philip and his family had been driven from Jerusalem because of persecution, they spread the word of Jesus with much effect, first in the city of Samaria. It says the result was: “so there was much joy in that city” (Acts 8:8). Later, Philip was driven by the Spirit of God to the desert and there had a very interesting meeting with an Ethiopian court official who the scriptures tell us was a eunuch. When asked by the Ethiopian a question about a particular passage from Isaiah which spoke of the coming Jesus, it says:

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:35-39)

## **To Those Who Responded in Faith in Thessalonica**

When Paul, Timothy and Silas preached the good news of Jesus in Thessalonica, though there was immense turmoil and difficulty for those who received the Lord Jesus when they responded by faith in him, Paul said: “because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and

in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit. “ (1 Thessalonians 1:5,6)

And then these Thessalonian believers became the means through which the good news of the gospel was sounded forth far and wide.

“For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10)

I conclude from these examples that wherever Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, is presented to people and they respond by faith, there will always be great joy and there will always be a sharing of that good news of great joy which is for all people wherever they live and with any that they are in contact with.

## Good News – Great Joy – To All People!

My dear friends, let's make sure that we ourselves have welcomed Jesus into our own lives and know the joy he alone can give. In our parishes and in our own lives this season and throughout the coming year let us open our mouths and speak about him so that others can know that joy and this can be a time of great harvest.

May the joy of the Lord be our strength and may the message of Jesus, the message the angels brought to the shepherds, be on our lips more and more. Then we most assuredly will have a glorious Christmas and the New Year may be a time of wonderful harvest.

Christmas blessings to you and your loved ones!

+ *Charlie*

The Right Reverend Charlie Masters  
Diocesan Bishop



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