



A letter from **ALISTAIR BEGG**

DECEMBER 2022

Warmest Christmas Greetings!

It is a privilege for me to receive so many letters—even if at the same time, I bemoan the fact that I am able to respond to so few of them. Perhaps one day, when I am no longer in the pulpit, it will be possible for me just to enjoy corresponding with you!

As I write towards the end of the day, I try to imagine all the places and people who read this. I know that there are young families juggling the joys and sorrows of raising children. Some are military personnel, whose service we applaud. Others are teenagers trying to figure out their lives, dreaming dreams, making plans, finding friends. Then there are ER medics, retired pastors, single mothers, prisoners, and widows.

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I had a note from one of the latter which hit home: “It’s so lonesome to be a widow. There are times when you just need to talk things over with your spouse. We have a wonderful dog who misses Bill like I do, but he only ‘talks dog’ and looks so sad.” Alongside her note is an invitation to “A Christmas Celebration with Parkside Church,” our annual Christmas concert. It contains the dates and is decorated with a star and just one name: EMMANUEL. It means, as we know, “God with us”! Jesus, who saves His people from their sins, sent His disciples out into the world with the Good News, assuring them, “I am with you always.” In His presence there is fullness of joy. “The hopes and fears of all the years” are met in Him.

Quoting from that carol reminds me to encourage you to listen to the service of Nine Lessons and Carols from King’s College,



A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Cambridge (Dec. 24 at 10:00 a.m. eastern). It begins with a Bidding Prayer: “Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve our care and delight to prepare

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ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the record of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child.”

And so, wherever we are, let us make our home glad with the news of salvation and our carols of praise.

Once again, and on behalf of our entire team to you and yours: a very merry Christmas!

