

The Moderator's Christmas message

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is Rt Rev Colin Sinclair who is minister at Palmerston Place Church. He has shared his thoughts about Christmas with us.

"I think I'll give Christmas a miss this year"

How often have you heard people say that?

When pressed you discover, usually, that there is a formula for a successful Christmas, and if you don't have all the ingredients then you don't qualify.

So what do you need? Well "Christmas is family time", but if you are on your own, if you have been bereaved, if your family are not speaking to one another, then it makes sense to give Christmas a miss. Does it?

"Christmas is for the children" but we never were able to have children, ours have grown up and scattered, we will leave it to others to enjoy. Should you?

"Christmas is expensive" and we don't have money to spend, my job is not secure, I daren't risk adding to my debt, not for us this year. Really!

If Christmas is good news only for those who have family, only those with money for food and gifts then it is a very selective experience and leaves far too many out in the cold.

The problem is that our images of Christmas are too often built round Victorian images of rooms festooned with

decorations or family gathered round an impressive tree with presents underneath.

Attractive though that is, the danger is we miss the point altogether. To a group of socially despised shepherds, doing a night shift with their sheep, living under an extortionate and humiliating occupation, a group of angels lit up the night sky.



Palmerston Place Church

They confronted the startled shepherds with news that something had happened that would change their lives and everyone else's also.

The message of the angels was that this was good news for all the people, the broken-hearted as well as the blessed, the lonely as well as the loved, the poor as much as the prosperous.

For Christmas helps us recalibrate our view of God. He is not distant from us, nor demanding of us. Rather he is "God with us" alongside us, sharing our joys and our sorrows.

Even if we do not have the means to have a traditional Christmas we can have a Christ centred Christmas and that can mean so much more. If you are able why not visit a local

Church and perhaps the traditional carols will burrow their way into your heart and get you singing for joy.

