

Out of the darkness, the light shall shine

Dear Friends

For those unfamiliar with Christmas memorial program we call *Lights for Lives*, a few words of explanation.

Begun in 1993, *Lights for Lives* was the initiative of a few members of Charleswood who were sharing the experience of facing Christmas with heavy hearts for the loss of a beloved family member. Their idea was to allow others who also longed to remember someone during the holidays to literally place a memorial light in the sanctuary of the church. Throughout December volunteers would be available before and after church to receive the names of loved ones remembered and to provide small *Lights for Lives* tree ornament that could be shared with others. On the first or second Sunday in January a special *Lights for Lives* worship service is held at which prayers, readings, and songs are offered for those who have gone before us.

Lights for Lives allows us acknowledge that this can be a very difficult time of the year. It also serves as a testimony that one can worship in Advent and Christmas in an emotional state other than joy. When we say that *everyone* is welcome here that includes the heavy-hearted.

As we tried to re-imagine a ministry as incarnational as *Lights for Lives* in this disrupted year, two things became evident. The first is that in some ways it will have to be less-than it has been in others years. We won't be able to provide the star-shaped ornaments nor will we be accepting donations for grief support agencies. However, the second thing we realized is that this is an essential service and that *Lights for Lives* must take place this year.

With that in mind I am pleased to announce the **online *Lights for Lives* Christmas Memorial Program for 2020**. I am deeply grateful to Robert Godkin, Daryl Godkin, and Janet Ammeter for working so creatively to deliver this program. A new webpage has been developed and you can visit it by clicking here:

<https://charleswoodunited.org/lights-for-lives/>

We have placed a banner on the home page of the church website to provide easy access to the list of lives remembered. To request a name be added to the online Book of Remembrance please contact the church office by phone, 204-832-3667 or email (office@charleswoodunited.org).

It is our hope that this ministry may indeed bring you tidings of comfort and joy this Christmas season.

Grace and peace,

Michael