

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [January 3 Worship Service Video](#)

- All are welcome to attend **Hebrews eCafé on Zoom** every Sunday at 10am for an hour of informal fellowship. Please join us by clicking <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82450894254?pwd=bzBvTElPdnJWRVZjTStvRS9taWdpZz09> or phoning 204 272 7920 and entering meeting number 824 5089 4254 and passcode 858358
- This year's **Lights for Lives** program will be observed as part of the January 10 worship service. A story about Lights for Lives was published in the Winnipeg Free Press this week. Read it here: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/life/faith/lights-for-lives-beacon-of-hope-remembrance-573488602.html> or <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work-2/>
You may visit the Book of Remembrance here: <https://charleswoodunited.org/lights-for-lives/>
- Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others.
The link for sharing is: https://youtu.be/b-X7o_xunyU

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, January 3, 2021

Queen Elizabeth II once famously referred to 1992 as an “*annus horribilis*”. It is a Latin phrase which means ‘*horrible year*’ and was used by the Queen on the occasion of her Ruby (40th) Jubilee to describe the end of three marriages among her children and a fire at Windsor Castle within one calendar year. It brought this ancient term back into popular usage and it has been used by many to describe years that are especially difficult in personal terms.

To say that 2020 was an ‘*annus horribilis*’ is an understatement. It wasn’t merely a terrible year for a particular person or even a celebrated family. It has been a difficult and disruptive year for millions of people around the world. No one has been exempt from the threat of a global pandemic and nearly everyone has had the routines of their daily living affected, altered, and adjusted by this reality.

For those who have been ill or had to grieve the death of someone it has been especially painful. For those who have had to work under the threat of falling ill as a consequence of doing their job, it has been nothing short of unfair. Holding people in prayer has never been more critical that it has been this year.

However, the theme of this church, and many others, throughout 2020 has continued to be one of hope. Not foolish optimism, but a hope rooted in our experience of the past and the trustworthiness of the promises of the Gospel. And though it may seem counter intuitive for an ‘*annus horribilis*’ we have had much to be thankful for in the year gone by.

Without the freedom to worship together for nine months we have remained a connected and gathered community by use of YouTube video services, phone and email, zoom and acapella. The technology that has allowed us to hold fast to a strong sense of community seems nearly miraculous to me. What would we have done only a few years ago?

And if worship is the heart of a Christian community then outreach is our hands and feet. Unable to be together for fellowship we have nonetheless worked together to raise funds for Yazidi refugees whose food supplies fell short in the early days of the pandemic. We were able to carry on our partnership with Operation Ezra for The Healing Farm and Farmer’s Markets. We held an immensely successful dry goods food drive for refugees in September.

And we found a way to provide for and assemble nearly 60 Christmas Hampers. All this without failing to meet our pledged support for a variety of outreach agencies and the Mission and Support Fund of the United Church of Canada.

As a New Year begins we join with people around the world, of all faiths and of none, in wishing for an end of all that has made 2020 horrible. But in the best of ways, we simply continue on being the people God has called us to be, believing in the best of one another, and trusting that a day is coming when all that causes sorrow and sighing will cease.

I wish you a very Happy New Year and pray that 2021 will prove to be an "*annus miribilis*" a Latin phrase meaning '*wonderful year*'.

Grace and peace,

Michael