



MHA  
on the  
Bay

methodist homes

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Christmas Edition

BEHIND EVERY MASK IS A HERO



Thank you!

TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE MHA TEAM : YOU ARE ALL HEROES







## A VIEW FROM THE TOP

In preparing to write a piece for the Newsletter I wondered if I could do it without once mentioning Covid, or what a complete shambles our City is in, or the abuse of women, children and alcohol, or the racial divide, or corruption and greed across the world. I quickly realized that I couldn't; all of that, and more, is what has defined 2020, and has sapped our energy. Against all of that, there is still every reason to celebrate all the good that has happened. So my Christmas wish for you, the residents and staff and all the others who make up this MHA family, is that you may celebrate this unique time in history with gratitude and with hope. Desmond Tutu said: *"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness"*.

I often spend time thinking about how we have coped with Covid-19 during the 260+ days of official Lockdown. Not a day goes by that I don't humbly reflect on our 'track record' of Covid infections across MHA. I know for certain that God is constantly watching over us, as individuals and as an organization.

As far as the 'track record' is concerned:

- ❖ We are getting to the 10% level overall of infected residents/staff. I'm not sure if that is a good or bad figure, but we have never been faced with an 'outbreak' at any of our 11 facilities
- ❖ The majority have been asymptomatic
- ❖ As far as I am aware, none of our hospitalized 'casualties' was on oxygen in ICU for more than a couple of days. Two fatalities out of almost 700 people is nothing short of a miracle. Two is two too many, I know, but even though they were in their 90's, and therefore at the top end of the vulnerability scale, it doesn't diminish the sense of loss and pain
- ❖ I am absolutely convinced that our 'track record' can be put down to the extremely high level of protection provided via the decisions made by Government, by CovidCom and the Managers; by the fact that we have the financial and other essential resources to defend ourselves (we defend the front line, not the bottom line); by the extraordinary dedication of our staff, and by the wonderful co-operation of our residents
- ❖ We should not spend any time analysing when, where or how our 58 people became infected. There are nearly 70 million people across the world who must have asked that question about when/where/how they themselves became infected. It is virtually impossible to pinpoint
- ❖ We cannot, and won't, allow ourselves to rest on our laurels-----in many ways we're in a more dangerous situation than we were April-July. Sadly, more infections within MHA will occur
- ❖ We are NOT letting our guard down; we're reviewing our defence strategies daily, and we're implementing them (even though some are unpopular). We're keeping the enemy on the run!
- ❖ Our biggest challenge right now is encouraging residents and staff to continue the battle, not give up, not drop our high standards, and not become complacent.

As a CovidCom member, and as a Board member, I am immensely proud of each and every one in the MHA family, and that includes our outsourced service providers and our advisors. What I have witnessed over the past nine months has been a team effort of epic proportions.

Let me end off with what my late Board colleague Bob Zeiss wrote in the foreword to the MHA History book: *Let us never forget that all things are possible when mankind puts its faith in a mighty God. He has promised never to leave nor forsake those who respond to His call to put their trust in Him. Let it be said "If God is for us, does it matter who is against us?" To Him be the glory.*

I wish you all a Blessed Christmas, renewed courage, and a vastly better year in 2021. Covid-19 has highlighted for us all what is so wrong in this world; let us all play our part to fix it. Vaccinating 8 billion people isn't enough!

**Malcolm Stewart** (Board Chairman, CovidCom Chairman, and future MHA resident)





## IN MEMORIAM

For decades we have held a year-end Thanksgiving Service, with significant attendance. In the church service we have been able to express our gratitude to God for all the blessings bestowed on us as the MHA family, and to pay our respects to those residents and staff who had passed away during the year. In more recent years we have incorporated a meaningful candle-lighting ceremony and shown on screen the names of the those who had passed away.

Sadly, we cannot hold the Thanksgiving Service in 2020, but we will do that once it is again safe to gather in numbers in church. We can, however, share the names of those who have passed on since the 2019 service.

We remember them all with love and affection.

### **ANNESLEY/ SHEARITON**

Irene Brown  
Graham Trollip  
Dot Clarke  
Bill Sapsford  
Errol Williams  
Beth Loftie-Eaton

### **CASSIA GARDENS**

Shirley Gregory  
Valerie Cooper

### **BOB ZEISS BEDSITTERS**

Rhodes Gerhardt  
Chris Meiring  
Nellie Howard  
Trevor Schady  
Ruth Harding

### **CP BRADFIELD**

May Bean  
Molly Seaman  
Elaine Buchner  
Hillary Wakeford  
Sonia L'Estrange

### **MARANATHA FRAIL CARE**

Warren Bowen  
Monica Oosthuyzen  
Carol Woods  
Martin McMahon  
Bill Loppnow  
Helma Kieck  
Jack Bernstein  
Claire Hughes  
Pam Shapiro  
Patricia McNamara  
Anton Friederang

### **IRVINE VILLA**

Ken Shaw  
Ray Thompson

### **ALDERSGATE**

Colin Robertson  
Joan Walter  
Barrie Whittaker  
Brian Duigan  
Jenny Anderson  
Ineke Hall

### **WESLEY GARDENS**

Christel West





## REND THE HEAVENS

The word Advent means 'coming, or arrival'. For centuries (we think it started as early as the fourth century) the Church has set aside about a month to prepare for both the celebration of the coming of Christ AND the return of Christ. This month of preparation, of anticipation, of waiting for the arrival of Jesus, the Church calls Advent.

Michael Chan writes: *"At the heart of Advent is a deep wound: God's groaning, limping creation still waits for its healer to appear"*. The expectations, the waiting of Advent are deeply rooted in desperation.

Advent language, in the Bible, is that we wait with a deep longing, and the Bible calls that longing **hope**. And that hope is the deep longing, not for gifts and family celebrations, but for our messy world to at last be made right. As we wait, confident that God is on His way to us, we recognise that the world in which we live, is in a mess.

So, Advent is the confession that the world is not as we want it to be; and that our own lives are not as we want them to be. It's the deep longing for a Saviour.

Advent is a confession, and it's a cry. It's a confession that the world is in a mess. And it's a cry for God to intervene. It's a cry, of longing, frustration, of desperation for God to break through into this chaos.

So, the poet prophet Isaiah writes (64.1-2):

*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence; as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil, to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!*

Tear open the heavens Lord and come down; shake everything up and make it right.  
But He hasn't, yet – so, we cry; and we wait.

2020 has been quite a year. I hear the sounds of giving up; of weariness overtaking tired souls; of faith fading as troubles increase; of people falling away – too tired to care anymore.

But let me tell you, as terrible as that feels, this is not an entirely bad thing! Because when you feel like giving up, then you have walked into Advent; when you begin to sound like the prophet – 'tear open the heavens Lord and come down' – then you are waiting for a Saviour. And you're in Advent.

Waiting for the coming of the Lord means to recognise, or to refresh our awareness of our need for Jesus. We need the Lord.

We have to admit that many of the troubles of 2020 are, in fact, of our own making. The virus is the product of human cruelty and neglect. Its spread has been exaggerated by human arrogance and selfishness. The international response has exposed economic injustices all over the world. Lockdown demonstrated the many ways we routinely abuse the planet. Closed up in homes, more men began beating more women, more often.

It's more convenient to think that someone else has done this to us. But it's not true. Even if indirectly sometimes, our troubles are often of our own making.

But, mercifully, we are not left in that despairing place. Despite the closed heavens, despite his isolation, the prophet declares (64.8):

*"Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand"*.

May I say to you today, if you are tempted to give up – welcome to Advent! Welcome to the waiting! But more than that, listen to the prophet. There is always, even in despair, a 'Yet, O Lord, you are our Father'.

Even in his desperation, in his isolation, the prophet finds, maybe grasps for, his 'Yet, O Lord'. He refuses to give in, or to give up. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. Even in the worst of times, there is always one more 'Yet, O Lord' in all of us. As hard as it is to pray sometimes, there is always one more 'Yet, O Lord', in all of us. My deep prayer is that, in our troubles, we will be able to find it.

The first prayer of Advent is 'Yet, O Lord...'

At the heart of Advent is a deep, deep wound. Yet, yet, O Lord...you are our Father.

*(This is an edited version of an online sermon preached by Rev Rowan Rogers of Newton Park Methodist Church for the first week in Advent)*

