



Date: 20th December 2023

Bishop's Circular 10/2023

To:
All Clergy, Deaconesses, Evangelists,
Chairpersons of Diocesan Boards and Committees,
Members of the Diocesan Standing Committee,
Churches in the Synod of the Diocese of West Malaysia.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Advent Season Greetings, and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

ROOM FOR GOOD NEWS

It is the season of Christmas again.

In the midst of all the challenges; in the world, the Anglican Communion, our country, and our personal lives – we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. At the same time, we look forward to His second coming. We celebrate the gift of salvation that transforms us more and more to become like Jesus, and to do the works of God. We respond by bearing witness to this greatest miracle by propagating this Good News.

People throughout the Roman Empire were ordered to participate in the census. This is good news to the elite; the politicians, the businessmen, and the government. To the citizens, it is a burden; more taxation, people need to travel back to their hometowns, and, sheep need to be taken care of. The census is a reminder to the Jews that Caesar is King, and they are in his Kingdom. Times were difficult.

The people of God were looking forward for a different kind of good news; a Messiah, the establishment of the Kingdom of God, freedom from the yoke of tyranny. At the time when Caesar flexed his power through the calling of the census, God sent His Good News. This Good News is for everyone, unlike Caesar's which is only good news for the elite and oppressive to the rest. God's Good News is for everyone, even to the lowly, as in the case of the shepherds in Luke 2:1-21.

Though there was no room in the inn, and later Herod would go on a murderous rampage in an attempt to snuff out this Good News; we find that there was room in the hearts of people seeking God. Mary and Joseph said yes to God's invitation to be part of this Good News. Mary treasured all these things in her heart. I am sure that these acts of God in her life would see her through all the difficult rumours about her, and her child, that she will face henceforth. The Shepherds received the Good News. They went to see and celebrate the birth of our Lord the Saviour. Overcome with great joy,



“Behold, I am making all things new”
Revelation 21:5



they went about sharing this Good News. On the eighth day of the child's birth, at his circumcision, he was named Jesus. The community received him.

This room in the lives of families, ordinary people, and the community bears witness to God's grace in inviting everyone to receive Jesus as the Saviour. This room bears witness to the breadth of God's love and grace. At Christmas we are presented with an opportunity to remember in our celebration this great love of God. Let us continue to emulate Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, and the community of faith, who participated in the invitation given by God, and made room in their hearts for the Saviour.

On behalf of the Diocese of West Malaysia, WE wish you a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Veni Sancte Spiritus,



The Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Steven Abbarow
Bishop of West Malaysia



“Behold, I am making all things new”
Revelation 21:5

