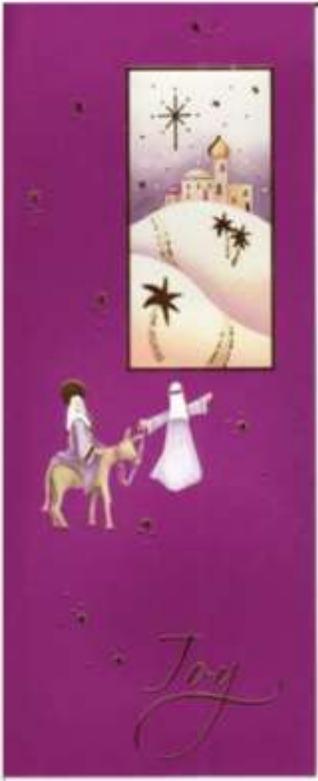


Christmas Greetings from Belize



This is just a short newsletter to send everyone Season's Greetings as we approach Christmas, and to pray that you will find time amid all the preparations to slow down and really appreciate the wonderful gift of Jesus, 'our God, contracted to a span; incomprehensibly made man.'

As we approach the end of the year here in Belize, we are bringing to a climax our celebrations of 250 years of Methodism in the Caribbean; next Sunday we will be having one united service for all the congregations in Belize City, and surrounding areas, with other circuits having similar celebrations too. This will be followed by a procession of witness through the main streets of the city. And on Boxing day we will be dedicating a new Methodist church building in Belama. It won't be quite finished, but there is a need to start using the premises, as well as wanting to have the dedication in this 250th year!

Since September several new children, youth and young adult groups have got off the ground, and many of these took the lead in the special services throughout the district for Youth and Young Adult Sunday in November.

We continue to work closely with churches from the United Methodist Church in the USA, and recently a team from Salado, Texas brought dentists and a vet, along with others who assisted in the community and at the local Methodist School in Sittee River. More teams are planning trips for next year, and we look forward to working with both new and returning groups.

And we hope very shortly to have a date for the ground breaking for the new school in Belmopan.

The research project, which one of our Methodist High School teachers was involved in, Male Social Participation and Violence in Urban Belize, has been completed and we now have to look closely at the findings and see where and how changes can be made to address the underlying problems. This will need response from all sectors of society, including government and the churches if we are to make a difference in the lives of our young people here in Belize.

We give God thanks for 250 Years of Methodism in the Caribbean, and for being able to celebrate it with the dedication of a new church building. Please keep in your prayers those who were affected by Hurricane Richard here in Belize, the families of those affected by the continuing gang and gun violence, and all those trying to find a way to reduce the levels of violence and to bring a future filled instead with hope to the young people of this country.

As I look forward to the visit of my son Kevin, and his girlfriend Lucy, this Christmas, I wish you all a peaceful and joyful time, and may God continue to bless you in the year ahead.

With love and prayers

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