



# ICDF

*International Christian  
Dance Fellowship*

*December 2020*



This year has been a challenging year for all. Planned conferences and workshops have had to be cancelled / postponed for another year or brought online. At the start of 2020 few of us knew much about Zoom or other online platforms but now most of us are familiar with them. Teachers have learnt to teach dance from their homes and CDF members have learnt to move chairs, tables, wires and the cat to create a 'safe' dance space. Some of our ICDF and CDF leaders have so mastered the art of Zoom that they can host more than one workshop stream at a time, as was experienced at the CDFB National Conference.

We thank all of our leaders for the connections they have been maintaining with their members during this Covid-19 season. The photo above taken at the Christian Dance Fellowship of Ireland's Worship Dance Picnic, sums up our experiences this year ... finding innovative ways of doing fellowship while at the same time keeping social distancing.

May you all be blessed in this Christmas season and be renewed in strength and vision as we step into the next year.

*Jan Dyer*

# Love Absorbing Love

All around our housing estate lights are twinkling and sparkling. This year, more than ever, people need to bring joy and festivity and light into their lives. Weeks earlier than usual, we're seeing new decorations each day on our late afternoon walk: streamers of lights, flashing reindeer and snowmen and stars, and of course Christmas trees. This is especially important for the dark winter days of the Northern Hemisphere, where days are shorter and, as I write now, often grey and misty. Of course, for others of you it will be high summer, and snowmen and reindeer will only feature on Christmas cards.

My preparations include thinking up a design for our Christmas cards. Below are drawings of mothers and babies from previous years' cards, representing different nationalities - just as we do. Two are based on images of refugee women, and the other of our daughter-in-law and her firstborn child.



A mother. A child. Love absorbing love.

This year I'm aching to be with family - a physical, visceral longing. But this Christmas that can't happen for so many of us. There will be cards, and presents, and beloved faces on camera ... but not the physical presence we crave. For most of us this is a temporary situation. For others it is a permanent loss, this side of heaven. But the pain of separation is not how it was supposed to be ...

A phrase from the carol 'Come, thou long-expected Jesus' has been echoing in my mind: 'Dear desire of every nation, joy of every human heart.' (from Haggai 2:7.)

Humankind's deepest longing. And God enfleshed comes.

This year - when nothing has been as expected and where degrees of anxiety and dashed hopes have coloured many lives - this year will still culminate with the Desire of every nation coming to us as a babe. As we sing in 'O little town of Bethlehem': 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.'

Let the Christmas lights blaze! Let carols be sung!

Hold close in your arms those you can be with and let that embrace be a prayer:

- for those from whom you are separated
- for those whose hopes have been dashed
- for those longing to be comforted
- for those who cannot be in their own home or place of safety
- of gratitude and wonder for the Desire of Nations wrapped in humanity

And for your own dear and beloved selves, that we will each know the embrace of God, and that he will be our joy.

*Pippa West* - Pastoral Adviser for ICDF

## From the Joint-Coordinators' office

Welcome to our final ICDF newsletter for this year where we will be revisiting the highlights for 2020. Much has happened and some changes have taken place that you have read about in our monthly newsflashes. The ICDF Wider Committee had its Annual General Meeting in November and in this newsletter we will also be sharing with you some of the reports from the meeting as well as news from our countries.

### Joint-Coordinators

Liesl Townsend was elected as a third Joint-Coordinator at the last AGM and she joined Jan Dyer and Saartjie de Wet in the ICDF virtual office. Our jobs as Joint-Coordinators and members of the Steering Committee mean that we mostly work from in front of our computers in a typical office setting. Between the three of us we manage all the different roles that we are expected to cover, and more. Sometimes our role is pastoral, sometimes we help with the establishment of new projects / countries, sometimes we oversee projects and there are times when we get involved with the actual tasks. There are days when things go smoothly and there are days when we are caught by surprise but in all of this, we are grateful to be in this position to serve alongside each other and our fellow ICDF leaders.

### Steering Committee

The Joint-Coordinators are joined by a talented and capable Steering Committee to help with the many areas of focus within ICDF. They are ...

Barbara Wood: documents, conference finances  
Lucy Jarasius: documents  
Sue Sutherland: minutes secretary, enquiries  
Noel Filemon: publications



*Photo: Taken at the India gathering. The Steering Committee from left to right .... Noel, Lucy, Liesl, Jan, Saartjie, Barbara and Sue*

### Constitutional Update

With the world in lockdown the Steering Committee was able to spend many Saturdays in meetings to discuss the update of the ICDF constitution in order to bring it in line with current practices, and also to make provision for the changes to the way countries become voting members in ICDF. This task has been completed and we have now turned our attention to reviewing the Operational Procedures that are implicated by the proposed changes to the constitution. We are hoping to have everything completed in 2021.

### ICDF News

We have continued to produce the ICDF monthly Newsflash and supported the ICDF Networks with their Newsletters - these have been sent to you and are also available on the ICDF website.

### Prayer Circle

Led by Kaye Strauss, anybody can join to pray for the ministry of ICDF. This group prays for the many countries connected with us and for the work of ICDF. You can join by going to ...

<https://www.icdf.com/en/support-us/support-us>

## Country Leadership

We can report that there has been a change in country leadership in Britain, South Africa, Suriname and USA ... we welcome Anna Arnold (Britain), Melanie Erasmus (South Africa) and Radjesh Narraina (Suriname) as National Coordinators and Dawn Churchill as Country Contact (USA).

We remind you of the Scripture we were given for our term of office from Isaiah 52:2. Once again, we praise God for the outworking of this Scripture during this last year. We pray this Scripture over your countries also as we keep looking to the new ways that the Lord will open up for us and of how the Lord would have us grow both internationally and within our countries.

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.”

Isaiah 52:2 (New International Version)

## ICDF - Creating Space For Diversity

### Taking It Online



*ICDF Youth Conference* - As with the rest of the world, Covid-19 has changed the way we function ... for the countries perhaps more so than for us in the ICDF office. We are aware of countries that have and are making use of online events. In a similar way ICDF has spread its wings by hosting an online ICDF Youth Conference in this month of November through the channels of the ICDF Network for Youth. We are trusting that this experience will pave the way for more online events for the next year.

*Country events* - Another exciting development was online country events that were open to international delegates. The online classes and conferences are now accessible from anywhere in the world and as a result Britain and South Africa already had international delegates at their conferences. These are opportunities to truly be part of a global network of dancers.

### Website

The Mobile Device Friendly website has been launched for the main ICDF website, the ICDF Foundation website and the ICDF Gatherings website. For this we want to thank Marie-Luise from Luxo Five and her team in Germany for all their hard work and for their continued support for the work of ICDF.

Also new on the website is a page on the Pioneers of Christian Dance. We are planning to add to the names of these incredibly talented people who gave so much towards this ministry. See... <https://icdf.com/en/node/301>

### Social Media

We bring to your attention once again our social media presence. Please make use of our sites as listed below.

- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/channel/UC8qmQVDheUHRIPsAFLxT-Pw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8qmQVDheUHRIPsAFLxT-Pw)
- Instagram: icdfsosial (#ChristianDance #ICDFworld #ICDFfamily)
- Facebook: International Christian Dance Fellowship (page and group)
- Pinterest: icdfsosial (boards: Instruments; Health; Garments; Teaching; The Word; Quotes)
- Twitter: @ICDF (announcements only)



# Breaking News Conference 2022



Venue: Gullbrannagården, close to Halmstad, Sweden  
<https://gullbrannagarden.se/en/welcome-to-gullbrannagarden>

Dates: The first week of August in 2022

Theme: I came to give life with joy and abundANCE

Hosted by Psalto - the Christian Dance Fellowship of Scandinavia

*Our hope and prayer is that many would find that times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord as we meet with one another and with Jesus who came to give life with joy and abundance. (John 10:10b, the Voice translation)*

# ICDF Diploma in Dance Ministry

Because the Diploma is all delivered online, life has continued much as usual in 2020. Each of the tutors reviewed their papers to ascertain whether and/or how assessments could be achieved by electronic means so that all subjects could remain available. As usual students are scattered across the world, all studying for the Diploma on an individual basis (ie, there are no requirements to be part of a single year cohort). This trimester, we are expecting one Certificate completion and, Covid-permitting, one Diploma completion. We now have a panel of 8 advisors from 8 different countries and a range of occupations, including university department heads. It is great to have all of these highly experienced and committed people on board.

**2021 Trimester dates: 15 February - 7 May; 24 May - 13 August; 30 August - 19 November**

More information can be found on the website at ....

<https://www.icdf.com/en/education/icdf-diploma-or-certificate-dance-ministry>



Photo: CDFSA workshop, 2008

## ICDF Foundation

This year the Foundation commissioned a dance called “Apart...yet together”, for World International Dance Day 2020 as a way of encouraging the dance community during the pandemic. This project was a response to the President of the United Nations’ Council of Dance (CID) call to choreographers worldwide to produce a dance that would uplift humanity during these hard times.

See ... <https://foundation.icdf.com/en/icdf-foundation-films>

The Foundation has also been exploring ways to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community (ATSIC) in Australia as this community is so vulnerable to COVID-19. Hence the Board agreed to financially assist David Stanfield to continue his work alongside the ATSIC on Elcho Island, to develop Christo-centric traditional dances. See ... <https://youtu.be/7M27hxlQ66A>

To find out more ... <https://foundation.icdf.com>

## ICDF Networks

As in the previous year, ICDF showcased a different Network in a newsletter every month and this was mailed to all on our mailing list. We have also made these newsletters available to the public by uploading them to our website at ...

<http://icdf.com/en/networks/network-newsletters>.

There are currently 17 ICDF Networks and a list of these Networks can be found on our website at ... <http://icdf.com/en/networks>.

The remit for the Networks is to provide a platform for conversation among members through emails, in a Facebook group or any other platform that works for them. For us it has been a privilege to work with these Network leaders who are committed to their vision and we thank them for the invaluable role that they fulfil in the bigger picture of the mandate and work of ICDF.

## Thank You

We thank you, too ... our Country Leaders and Network Leaders; our country members and network members; our ICDF Friends and supporters; the ICDF Foundation and their supporters; the ministry of our ICDF Diploma in Dance Ministry; our Prayer Teams; and our behind the scenes teams. ICDF wouldn't be ICDF without your response to God's Call to be a part of it. We thank you for the gifting and anointing that you bring. We pray God's blessings over you. We pray, too, His grace as we come humbly before our God to serve Him in relationship together. We thank you for your support of the Steering Committee and of us through this last year. With our love to you all, in Jesus.

*Jan, Saartjie & Liesl*

On this page is a flowchart to show the different areas of focus in ICDF.

We are all connected to one vision symbolised by the logo in the centre and, through that one vision, we are all connected to each other by the spokes coming from the centre and the circle that keeps us all together.





## Manifesto

We are a movement of God, not just an organisation called together by God. In order for us to be an effective movement we need to be organised and accountable, but we are not just an organisation.

We are a body, a part of the body of Christ in movement. We are connected as a body each with our different functions, but connected and moving in the same direction and with purpose.

We are a body that communicates. Just as the body communicates through its nervous system so we communicate through the structures and methods that are available.

We want to be a testimony of God by moving forward, as one, with Christ at the head. Wherever we are positioned we want to make an impact through the leading of the Holy Spirit in the church, the community, the world.

## Financial Support

This last year has seen faithful giving to help us fulfil our mission calling. This financial support to ICDF has come through country tithes, regular giving, and donations for projects and bursaries. For the part you played, a HUGE THANK YOU to each one of you.

### Looking to the Future

Our financial vision remains as last year and ideas for supporting this through Regular Giving we copy below. With our thanks for your continuing support

### Regular giving

Regular giving can be monthly, annually or somewhere in between. This can be done through our website at ... <https://www.icdf.com/en/support-us/support-us> There you will find choices of how you can donate

Regular giving is needed for ...

i. The day to day running of ICDF

ii. Projects - From time to time these we announce.

iii. The Bursary fund - We have a vision for a bursary fund receiving donations regularly so that by the time the fund is needed the donations are already there.

Please pray and if the Lord prompts you to help financially, please complete the form on the website at ... <http://gatherings.icdf.com/funding/support-form> or email us at [icdfworld@gmail.com](mailto:icdfworld@gmail.com). Thank you.

**Visible - Available - Relevant**



# Country News

## ICDF Indonesia

The majority of dance ministry activities at local churches in Indonesia have been put to a halt, without knowing when to be back in motion. The majority of dance ministry activities at local churches in Indonesia have been put to a halt, without knowing when to be back in motion. This has caused a switch to online activities, but unfortunately, many of us simply are not able to fully take the online way.

While some Christian dance communities do have online events (minor workshops and/or performances), many others are still catching up, considering that our Internet connection quality is not yet too reliable or well-distributed nationwide and that it now must be used for everything in people's daily life - from education to work and business and commercial transactions. We ended up finding the core of our networking relationship, though: to connect with each other and strengthen each other. Instead of focusing on organizing online events, we have found a way to bless and build each other through chats, discussions, and prayers together in online forums. Interestingly, there have been new creative projects every now and then through all this: ideas, collaborations, dance pieces. We experience and witness that the creative spirit blossoms through our spiritual relationship.

From Indonesia, we send our prayers for God's ever flowing peace over our fellow Christian dancers all around the world.

- Lina Lasup



*Photo: Kattetong cookies that a member sold, one of the favourite treats we enjoyed during the pandemic*

## ICDF Japan

By God's grace we have been able to continue to perform Christian ballets in the last months like "Moses - Prince of Egypt", "Joseph and Mary - Nativity", and will continue in 2021 with "Messiah - The Life of Jesus".

Our collaboration with Japanese churches is developing since 2020 and more performances have been planned - before Covid delayed a lot. To run a professional scholarship ballet academy ([www.abc-tokyo.com](http://www.abc-tokyo.com)) alongside creating Christian ballets with our Youth Company is a challenge, but God really makes it possible.

Looking forward to visiting other countries in years to come to share more of our work and His glory.

- Chris Martinu, Rio Mitani and the team members



*Photo: ABC Company in Japan*

## ICDF USA

During the year, ICDF USA has been preparing to relaunch. Their relaunch event was held online in December 2020 and was described as a "life-changing morning of dynamic teaching, impartation, and restoration for those who are weary. Like a breeze of fresh healing air, or a cascading waterfall of joy, that causes you to leap out of complacency, doubt, frustration, and stagnation".

- Dawn Churchill



## ICDF Australia

### ***The New Thing (TNT): activate the arts to create and heal:***

We're kind of amazed that monthly gatherings for creatives HOSTED BY DANCERS have been happening for 3 years! We never know what's going to happen until it's done! That has become our catch-phrase to describe the journey. 2020 pushed us into a combination of having to facilitate limited real-time/real space (Covid-restriction-compliant) activity with cyberspace connection via the Zoom video conferencing platform.

### ***Fresh Connect:***

We are excited to announce the appointment of Thea Webster as our ICDF Australia Fresh Connect Team Leader! Thea, an arts/education student at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), whilst connecting into the ICDF Network for Youth, will gather a team to prayerfully strategise and pave the way for young dancers, creatives and visionaries to explore and actualise the future of CDF ministry amongst the peoples of this country... starting one step at a time

### ***Regional Friends and International Collaborations:***

For Pentecost this year, we were blessed with the invitation by our ICDF ANZ (Aotearoa New Zealand) friends to contribute to The Oceania Blessing 2020 video featuring worship dance and readings of the Aaronic Blessing in Maori, Fijian languages, and also an Australian Aboriginal dialect (Ramindjeri/Ngarrindjeri)

Please Pray for us:

How the local work in Western Sydney evolves, how fresh connections in Queensland and elsewhere spark, and how all of this works together for the Lord's glorious purposes, we covet your prayers.

We are still looking for a new Country Leader and facilitation team!

We are thankful for our Creator's faithfulness, guidance, provision and inspiration, throughout the challenges of 2020, and want to walk humbly with Faith, Hope and Love motivating everything we do, keeping in step with the Spirit as we move into 2021!

- Lucy Jarasius





## ICDF Brazil

During this year in response to lockdown, Brazil has expanded their online presence with workshops and the launch of an online dance school. They were invited onto National Network TV for a programme featuring the Zoe Dance - a dance form that has been created by the ICDF Representatives, John and Carol Bassi. In November they hosted their ninth consecutive annual International Christian Dance event. The main objective of this conference was to integrate the Dance Ministries of different denominations and to promote the establishment of Christian Dance in this generation based on the word of God both in Brazil and internationally.

- John and Carol Bassi



Photo: John and Carol Bassi

## ICDF Britain

Along with so many of our ICDF sister countries everything seemed to stop when in March Covid-19 hit the UK. Churches and dance studios were forced to close their doors and all the plans we had been so excited about both Nationally and in the regions were put on hold. Sadly, the biggest casualty for us was the cancelling of our wonderful Brunel Manor Dance Break; a bi-annual mid-week Christian dance retreat that Marie and Andrew Bensley have been running for many years with a team from the CDFB. I think 2020 would have been the 15th year.

I was very concerned that we had to act quickly to encourage our members and find a way to ensure lockdown was not going to stop us from dancing and praising the Lord so the CDFB went virtual. We held our first virtual regional day at the beginning of May and realised as soon as we started advertising that this new way of meeting was opening doors for people all over the country to attend. We even had ICDF friends from Ireland, New Zealand and USA joining us. Since then, we have held many virtual workshops and worship events on a regional and national level.

The highlight of the year came in September when we held our National Conference and 30th Anniversary celebration online. This pioneering virtual event was held over 3 days across 3 streams on zoom with live worship, a social evening, over 12 workshops, a special church service and a wonderful celebration evening that included testimonies and memories from members of the last 30 years.

- Anna Arnold

## ICDF India

In November, ICDF India was invited by the C.S.I Church Chevaracode for the World Sunday School Day program 2020. After lockdown this was our first dance workshop by ICDF India. 10 ICDF India members were part of the day.

- Albert Emmanuel

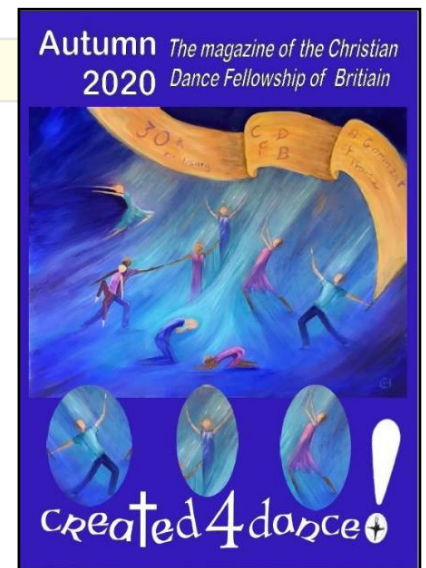


Photo: Front page of the CDFB magazine showing details of a painting by Candy Hackney commissioned for their 30th Anniversary





## ICDF Aotearoa NZ

2020 has been one of the most challenging times to minister in Christian dance and to live through during the global pandemic. In New Zealand our government was swift to enact a national lockdown where we stayed home for 8 weeks from 25th March – 21st May.



*Photo: Tambourine Workshop – Hanmer Retreat*

ICDFANZ During Lockdown - 25th March – 21st May 2020

During the NZ national lockdown we kept facilitating ICDFANZ via our Facebook group and joined in online worship dance events from across the globe

The Oceania Blessing - Lockdown Video compilation with ICDFANZ/ICDF Fiji/ICDF Australia

We were inspired to put together our own Oceania Blessing Christian dance video after having watched the video of the UK Blessing – it was amazing how this all came together and we praise God for this. We advertised and received submissions from NZ, Australia & Fiji which we put together with the spoken Aaronic Blessing in Te Reo Maori (NZ indigenous language), Fijian and Australian Aboriginal dialects.

You Tube video link: <https://youtu.be/SCXdix-np6g>

ICDF Global Prayer Watch Day - 31 May 2020

Robyn Holland joined Belinda Andrews in Oxford on Sunday 24 May to record a simple prayer dance movement to music representative of one's own country. YouTube video link: <https://youtu.be/1EuwgTeLYRg>

ICDFANZ Hanmer Retreat 7th- 8th July 2020

We were very blessed to come out of lockdown and be able to organise an event to meet together for a two day mid-winter retreat at the spa town of Hanmer Springs, North Canterbury. Those that came enjoyed a full day of workshops and a meeting to plan our ICDFANZ National Tour in 2021 (7 cities South Island – May 2021, 7 cities North Island, October 2021). In the evening we had some stage presentations of what we had learned in our workshops and a video presentation of some of the cultural dances from the ICDF India Gathering in 2019. - Belinda Andrews

## ICDF Scandinavia

At the doorstep of Christmas, warm greetings from ICDF Scandinavia-Psalto. During the past year lots of things have changed, including our name. At the Psalto online annual general meeting in October it was decided to change the name from ICDF Sweden to ICDF Scandinavia. Since we have representatives from different nations in our dance fellowship it seemed natural to do so. We are hoping to see more representatives from the different Nordic countries join us in worshipping God through dance and movement.



*Photo: Taken at the Aarhus conference*

We wish to encourage us all with the link below. It's a link to a dance done by some of our Seniors in Sweden. The Members of the dance group are aged from 64–79 years. They are stepping out having this devotion published online. The dance is a part of a devotion on the theme of the treasure of earthen vessels (2 Cor: 4,7). The key message is that life in Christ is conveyed more clearly in our imperfections than if we were perfect. The song itself is called "Nothing can trouble" in English. The song is from the Christian Community in Taizé, France. See ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myIskLGr4BY>

- Gunnel-Maria Palmqvist

## ICDF Kenya

Hi everyone,

Here is some news from Kenya. Since India, together with Daniel Baraka (who also came to India) and the 2 other members of the interim steering committee, we have been talking, praying and planning about getting ICDF in Kenya off the ground. This has culminated with our first fellowship meeting taking place virtually on the 25th November.



*Photo: Workshop archive photo*

It went brilliantly and we are now proceeding to mapping out the way forward which includes the following:

- Team building for the leadership
- Creating a social community on Facebook and WhatsApp
- Monthly fellowship meetings - online or face to face
- A simple dance ministry training curriculum for members, giving them a foundation in discipleship, worship, gift stewardship and development and ministry excellence to the glory of God.
- Mobilizing Kenyan participants for the 2022 ICDF conference for fast-tracked growth in that intense week of connecting, collaborating and learning

Please pray with us as we build, grow and establish ICDF Kenya. We pray for God to walk with us and guide us every step of the way. Not our will, but His be done.

Best regards,

- Carol Mwazi

## ICDF Ireland

The year started well for CDFI in 2020 with a day of Worship Dance in Belfast (January) and a Pamper Fundraising day (February). Once the lockdown started many planned events had to be postponed or cancelled. The highlight of the year came in September when we had an “Open Air, Social Distancing, Worship Dance” picnic by the sea at Holywood.



*Photo: CDFI Worship Dance Picnic*

One of those who attended wrote, “No flags were allowed this time around, so we made good use of the wooden poles as prayer tools of spiritual warfare. We prayed for the land and the people and we also enjoyed each other’s company while we ate a picnic meal. We also got to bless one another using the poles to “knight” each other with the Lord’s Aaronic blessing. I found that quite emotional. The poles served as measuring tools that allowed us to come together without being too close.”

Another wrote, “The Worship Dance picnic was a lovely day. It was great to see everyone again after such a long time being in lockdown. It was very encouraging for me personally to see everyone just being free, being themselves, and to worship God through movement - whilst out in a public place, without any inhibition.”

Truly a day to remember.

- Julie-Anna Richmond

# A Weird Christmas

Hi from Canada. Thank you to everyone who remembers us and pray for us. In light of the COVID holding pattern Canada is in, I don't have any news this time around but a word of encouragement.

Jesus.

I don't know how to write about him as fully as writing his name.

It was a dreary day today, with rain and accompanying clouds forecast for way too many hours (if it weren't for the good rain does, I would pray God would make it a non-thing). I couldn't do anything I planned to do that would require me to be outside, and the clouds were so thick from early morning to late afternoon that I had to have a light on because there was not enough sunlight. And then, finally, in late afternoon, I saw a bit of sun. I checked the weather forecast to see if it had changed or if the hint of sun was false hope. As I checked the forecast, I saw the light through my windows get so bright within seconds that I was drawn to it. I turned off my man-made light and stood looking at the real thing for I don't know how long. The thought that struck me was Jesus to the rescue. It was too late to do what I'd planned to do without rain, but, even so, it took only seconds for what God created to make my world go from grey and dreary to bright and sunny, and it was like Jesus just stepped in and made things better. And Jesus can step in and, within seconds, make other things we face bright and sunny too.



As I hear Christmas songs about his birth, I look around my living space at the things waiting to be wrapped to give to people at church before Christmas if my area doesn't go into lockdown again first. I think of the Charlie Brown Christmas picture I just coloured for my cousin, because I didn't feel like standing in the stationery section trying to find the perfect card during COVID. Christmas gifts this year are coming from where I get groceries and household supplies and whatever I make with my many craft

supplies. I might put a tree on top of the table I make flags on this year. I don't remember ever leaving the table set up during advent and Christmas, because I need the coffee table underneath it, but this year has been weird. This Christmas is weird. And yet, in the midst of the weirdness, it struck me, Jesus came. After 400 years of people trying to make their way in life with things not quite right, not how they are supposed to be, dark with a clear path out hidden, Jesus came. He was born in the darkness, right there in the weirdness. And he's here with us too. With all the weirdness he came, interrupted everything to make things right again and show us the way through and out of our darkness, unattuned thoughts, and uncertainty. As he was in the first weird Christmas, so he is in this weird Christmas too. And even after he was killed, he came back in more weirdness, so he'll be with us next year too.

Merry Christmas, everybody. Let seeing whatever star you see tonight guide your thoughts and hearts to Jesus, God with us. Amen.

*Jennifer Balshaw*