Joyeux Nöel

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

There is much to rejoice over and the birth of Christ our Saviour is by no means the least. And yet besides there’s family, friends, holidays, food, gifts, beautiful scenery, hill walks, sleep ins, and a sleepy Scottish town that is overrun by neither students nor tourists.

Christmas money has already disappeared into buying more books and the list of things to read continues to grow. Somehow, amidst the galavanting, by God’s grace, I am getting some work done. Thank you for your prayers.

I think I miss the week between Christmas and New Year even more than a summer Christmas. More so when my brother and sister go to the MCG for Boxing Day…

I’ve told my mother that I’ll try and come home for next Christmas. So every day in my diary for 2017 until further notice now reads “finish thesis.” We shall see 😊
Pray

The priority for the next few months will be to try and get the thesis done. However, other things continue to demand my time and attention. I’m thankful for that. Please pray for a focus and balance, wisdom and diligence.

Pray that I might continue to live graciously and humbly doing the basics well: reading my bible, spending time in prayer, eating, sleeping, exercising… Pray that I might continue to have good communication and time with family and friends, such as you, that by God’s grace practically support me.

Pray that I might use my time well and have discernment about when to say yes and when to say no to various opportunities. Pray that I might continue to work at my languages and read broadly as well as in a focused way for my thesis. Pray that God might equip me well for whatever he has ahead for me to do.

Pray that opportunities to tutor might be fruitful for both me and students. These include some online tutoring for a doctrine overview subject and an ethics and practical theology subject in St Andrews.

Praise God for fellowship with his people at Cornerstone St Andrews. Pray that God’s Word might continue to be taught faithfully, pray that the children’s ministry might continue to flourish, pray that bible study groups might be places of care and prayer as people meet around God’s Word.

Pray that I might write clearly and with insight. Pray that connections with people through conferences and submission of papers to journals will bear fruit. That I might grow more like Christ and encourage others through my work.

Give thanks for fellowship with other PhD students at St Andrews, both those who’ve just arrived and those with whom I’ve shared the journey for the last 2 and a bit years. Pray that we might continue to speak the truth in love to one another. Pray that we might sharpen each other through our time together. Pray that our Friday reading group might be a particularly good place for this to happen.

I’m unlike Paul. I’m not in chains for the gospel. However, I am thankful for your partnership in the gospel. And I thank God that confidence in Him means I can be confident of His ongoing work in you.

Philippians 1:2-11

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

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Praise God for ongoing practical provision. Give thanks for the faithful givers month by month. Give thanks for payment for tutoring. Give thanks for money to cover food, clothes, heating, fuel, travel, books, computer needs. Pray that God might continue to meet my every need in Christ and that I might trust him for the big and the small things. Pray that he might provide through to the end of this project and into whatever comes next.

Praise God for many words. Pray that I might know which to delete and which to add, which to leave here and which to move elsewhere. Pray that I might know which scholars to spend time interacting with and who to note only in passing. Pray for good advice from my supervisor and others who express opinions about my work. Give thanks for librarians 😊