



Seasons Greetings

As we head into the Christmas Season, we are all having to rethink how we celebrate Christmas.

For most of us it will mean a lot of the Christmas traditions will have to be given a miss but what we do have is all the memories to help see us through.

When we emigrated to Canada our first Christmas was a very strange one for us. Coming from a large family (I have 4 brothers) I was used to having large family gatherings at Christmas and New Year. In fact, after Niall and I got married we would be the house that everyone came to. Our home was always filled with family and friends.

As a child growing up my parent's house was also filled with family and friends so much so if you sat down at the table you didn't leave before everyone was finished as there was no room to get passed anyone.

As the realization dawned on me that it was only going to be the five of us and that the house was going to be very quiet, we set about making some new traditions. We took light tours around town, went to the light festival in Airdrie, we went pond skating (my back did not like that) took in a live nativity play and several other events. However, it still made me sad to think that it would only be the five of us for Christmas Day, but then a kind friend invited us to their home for Christmas dinner. I have got to say that we all enjoyed ourselves and continued this tradition for several years.

It is not easy being away from family especially at this time of year but if we embrace technology, we can see family and friends. We have for several years Facetimed my oldest brother and his wife on Christmas day as my mom spends the day with them.

Now that we have grandchildren, we talk more about what our lives were like growing up and this has led to interesting conversations with our children and their spouses. Coming from Scotland you must remember that Christmas did not become a national holiday until 1958. Therefore, some of the traditions are not as long running as here in Canada.

Niall and I were talking about our Christmases the other night and we have such different memories. Niall lived on a farm with his parents and grandparents and his Christmas day was worked around milking time. Whereas my Christmas day was worked around my grandparent's work schedule (they worked hospitality) so our meal would be around 3:00 pm as this was when they would get a break.

I can also remember being about five years old and being in awe that Santa not only brought gifts, but he also managed to bring the gifts from my grandparents and cousins, who lived several miles away. True magic.

I would like to think that this is the year we share our Christmas memories with our children and grandchildren about what Christmas was like for us growing up and the memories of our children as they were growing up. A memory that I remind my kids of is that we always had robins in our garden and I would tell them that they had to behave as the robin would tell Santa if they weren't good. They believe it so much that when we moved, they asked if the robins would find us. The day we moved into our new home there was not one but two robins waiting for them.

I am sure like me you have lots of memories of past Christmases that you could share and maybe this is the year we embrace facetime/zoom and let our family share memories and try and make some sort of happy/funny memories for this year that we can share in years to come.

Let get creative about how we celebrate in this year of strangeness and make some amazing memories for our grandchildren.

Niall and I, along with Tim and Simone would like to wish you all the best Christmas you can give yourself and your family. Remember the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.

Lorna Richmond
Associate Grand Matron

Tim Cameron
Associate Grand Patron