

Sunday 3

### *Hope In Our Present*

“The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me” (Lk. 4:18)

Can we recognise that we are gifted, that we are privileged—we know our past, we recognise our call to the future, how shall we witness to this in our present? The work of God depends on God’s people—we are at the threshold of a season of generosity shall we live it?

*“Lord God, we are conscious of failure and weakness in the Christian life. Remind us of the spirit you have given us, lead us through repentance to the assured forgiveness of your sons and daughters. Empower us yet again we pray.”*

**AMEN**

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Sunday 4

### *Hope In Our Past*

“Do not be afraid” (Lk.1:30)

If we are the witnesses to the events we celebrate perhaps we are fearful. What if we fail, what if we are inadequate? Can we take confidence—hope—from God’s activity for his people—past, and future, to live our present as those overshadowed by the Spirit? The example of Mary’s discipleship might inspire our own.

*“Lord God, you can, you have in our past, enlightened us and enabled the weak and poor to be powerful witnesses to your presence in our world. Come to us touch our lives through the coming of Christ which we celebrate help us to recognise your closeness to us, your solidarity with us and therefore our closeness to you.”*

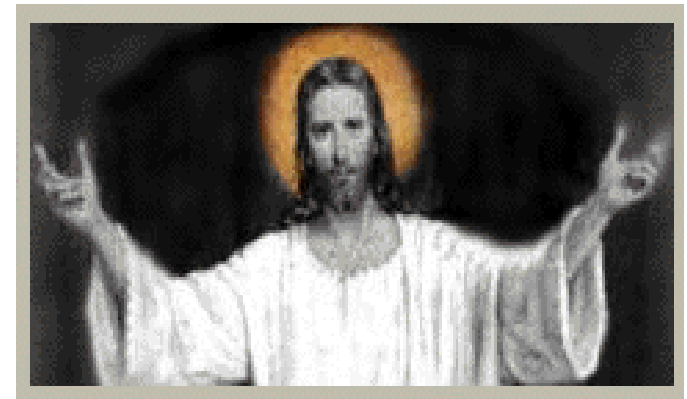
**AMEN**

### Reflections through Advent 2005

Text prepared by Revd Michael McMahon,  
Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes,  
Bishopton

Designed by Shona Paterson ACTS  
Produced by ACTS, Scottish Churches House,  
Dunblane FK15 0AJ: Tel 01786 826382

## *A Time of Hope*



## Reflections through Advent



## *A Time of Hope*

The Season of Advent is, above all, a season of hope. What do we mean? How can this help us? Perhaps to recognise what we mean by this concept—a ‘Christian Virtue’ remember, its up there with Faith and Charity! Hope, for the Christian, is not a vague notion that things will somehow get better, it is actually a powerful motivator and an encouragement to the other virtues. It is the impetus to look forward in the light of our past; the notion that God will act again for his people because he has acted for them in the past. How are we led through the season?

A couple of things to remember;

- Advent as a season may not be familiar to all our congregations.
- Our culture wants Advent to be Christmas, waiting and anticipation are not in favour—these concepts don’t sell things.
- The purpose of Advent is not to pretend that the incarnation has not occurred, it is to help us appreciate the person of God made man and our future. The first part of the Season centres on the second coming.

### Week 1

#### *Hope From Our Past*

“The People that lived in darkness has seen a great light” (Is. 9:1)

Hope for our futures arises from our past, our reflection on God’s activity for his people enables us to look forward with confidence—not certainty, but hope. We who have knowledge of the Scriptures understand the unfolding of salvation history—we recognise the process of unfolding. Reflect how the prophet Isaiah invites us to know we have been enlightened in the past—will God fail to continue this process?

*“Lord God, assure your people of your love, remind us of your forgiveness and enlighten us as we look forward in this holy Season. Give us courage to see beyond our difficulty and failure to the call you have given us. Empower us with your Spirit”.*

**AMEN**

### Week 2

#### *Hope For Our Future*

“Make Straight the Way of the Lord” (Jn, 1:8)

The process of enlightenment, as we see recall, does not depend on the decisive action of God alone. He invites his people to be part of this process. We who know our past, we who understand our calling are invited to take an active part in this—we are those who make the paths straight.

*“Lord God, we are tempted to lack generosity to acquire and to hoard. Your way paths are straight not crooked, open and generous. Help us to blaze that trail to show leadership in our culture and to witness to our awareness of your presence in us.”*

**AMEN**