

Advent Meditations 2025

Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness



Advent means coming. We prepare for the coming of Christ into our world and we look forward to the day when he will come again. In many ways, Advent is all about the journey of God to us through the centuries of the patriarchs, prophets and finally through Christ himself in the Incarnation. There are many physical journeys tied up in the Christmas narrative- the journey of Mary to Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the travels of the Magi and the flight into Egypt. But Advent is also a call for us to journey afresh towards God, to seek him.

Each day during Advent on the Diocesan website and Facebook page there will be a short meditation from people across the diocese to give us food for thought and prayer as we journey together. We are aware that not everyone has access to such communications and so we have put together some of these reflections for each Sunday of Advent and a piece from Bishop Mark for Christmas Day. Also included are the Bible readings for each Sunday that you may like to reflect on during the week. May this time of watching, waiting and journeying draw us closer to God, to each other, and to the world for which our God became Immanuel- God with us.

<https://moray.anglican.org/news/7/advent-reflections>

<https://www.facebook.com/mrc.diocese>

Christmas

Advent Sunday

Today marks not only the start of a new year in the Church calendar, but also the beginning of the season of Advent. Advent means coming and, in this time, we not only remember the first coming of Christ as a child born in a manger but also anticipate his Second Coming.

In our society today Advent is seen by many as a time of preparation, of shopping and cooking, of presents and cards and decorations. It can be a time so dominated by worldly and secular demands that taking time to focus on the true heart of Christmas can all too easily be lost. But what is the heart of the message of Christmas? Surely it is love. Love of a father for a world lost and divided, seared and soiled by man's inhumanity to man, by his greed and selfishness and pride. And the love of a Son, who came to save us. This poem by R.S. Thomas captures that message wonderfully.

The Coming by R.S. Thomas

*And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.*

*On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened*

*The sky. Many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.*

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Christmas should always have the cross at its heart for it is there that the true joy and peace of Christmas will be found. Not in the presents or the pudding, nor in the tinsel or the tree but in the wonder of a cross prepared for one born in a manger. A cross that alone can redeem, rescue and save. A cross that shares the darkness of the world and yet cracks it open with the light of resurrection and hope. Joy to the world, the Saviour comes!

Rev Canon Julia Boothby

Readings for Advent Sunday

Isaiah 2 v 1-5, Psalm 22, Romans 13 v 11-14, Matthew 24 v 36

Second Sunday of Advent



In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" (Matthew 3)

On this 2nd Sunday in Advent our Gospel Reading tells us of John the Baptist's call for us to repent.

"Prepare the Way for the Lord" is a biblical theme that appears in the Old and New Testaments, often associated with the prophetic call to repentance and spiritual readiness for the coming of the Messiah. If we're going to make the road ready for the King to walk along then we need to start making some changes. That's what John preached to the people. 'You need to change.' Change our minds, change the way we think and then our behaviour begins to change as well; an inward transformation of the heart and an outward demonstration of righteousness. During the Advent season of preparation, we remember two important comings of Jesus. The first is His birth in Bethlehem, when God came to earth as a baby. The second is the promise that He will come again one day as our King and Saviour. We should live in a state of readiness for His second coming.

"Prepare the Way for the Lord" is a profound biblical exhortation to spiritual preparation and readiness in anticipation of God's saving work through Jesus. We are urged to live in expectation of the Lord's presence and ultimate return.

While we prepare our homes for Christmas, we should also prepare our hearts for Christ. We sing, decorate, and celebrate, but we also pause, pray, and remember the real reason behind it all.

Now we are in December it seems that life is moving even faster; fast lights, gifts, songs, and endless shopping lists. Inside, though, Advent invites us to slow down. True celebration is not found in decorations or gifts, but in the quiet corners of our hearts. While the world is busy making things secret by wrapping the presents, God calls us to unwrap His presence and show Him to the world. As Christians we look beyond the glitter and remember the purpose - preparing for the coming of Jesus. It's about prayer, reflection, and faith.

‘When we prepare our hearts, we make room for peace, love, and gratitude to grow. And that’s where the real joy of Christmas begins.’ (The heart of Advent)

When we reflect on Mary’s quiet surrender and Martha’s loving service, we see that preparation is both stillness and action. It’s in listening and praying, in serving and giving, that we truly prepare our hearts.’ Every prayer, each act of kindness, every moment spent reflecting on God’s Word strengthens our faith and fills our hearts with hope, peace, joy, and love. Advent is a time to slow down, open our hearts, and embrace the presence of God in our daily lives.

Megan Cambridge

Diocesan Warden of Readers

Readings for Advent 2

Isaiah 11 v 1-10, Psalm 72 v 1-7, 18-19, Romans 15 v 4-13, Matthew 3 v 1-12

Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)



“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” — Philippians 4:4

The Third Sunday of Advent bursts into the season’s quiet waiting with a surprising command: *Rejoice!*

In the midst of darkness, uncertainty, and longing, the Church invites us today to lean into joy—not a shallow happiness, but the deep, steady joy that comes from knowing God is near.

John the Baptist stands once more at the centre of our readings, pointing not to himself but to the Light that is coming into the world. Advent joy is like that: not flashy or self-made, but reflective—a joy that grows because we recognise signs of God’s presence even before the fullness arrives.

This joy does not deny struggle. Rather, it is the kind of joy that can sit beside sorrow and still say, “God is faithful.” It is the joy of Mary who sings before the miracle is born, the joy of a people who trust that God is at work even when they cannot yet see the whole picture.

So today we light the rose-coloured candle, a soft glow of encouragement on the journey. It reminds us that even now—especially now—God whispers hope, healing, and renewal into our waiting hearts.

May we make space for joy this week:

the joy of God's nearness,

the joy of small mercies,

the joy that flows from hope.

Very Revd Sarah Murray | Provost of Inverness Cathedral

Readings for Advent 3

Isaiah 35 v 1-10, Luke 1 v 46b-55, James 5 v -10, Matthew 11 v 2-11

Fourth Sunday of Advent



As we come to the Fourth Sunday of Advent, our hearts are drawn to the quiet, steady light of **love**—God’s own heart beating at the centre of the Christmas story.

This weekend, in many churches and carol services, we will sing the carol *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, and its tender phrase rings out: “*the love-song that they bring.*” The angels’ ‘glorious song of old’ to the shepherds was not just an announcement, not only good news—it was a **love-song**. A melody from heaven that tells weary people they are seen, cherished, and held by God.

The question for us, in the noise and rush of these final Advent days, is: **Where are we hearing that love-song today?** Perhaps it comes in a moment of stillness, when God’s peace settles more deeply than words. Perhaps it is heard in the kindness of another, the sparkle of the frost on a winter morning, or in Scripture that reminds us we are beloved. The angels’ song has never stopped; it continues to echo through acts of compassion, reconciliation, mercy, and courage.

And another question follows: **How are we singing it?** Advent invites us not only to listen but to join the chorus as we await the coming of Christ. Each gesture of patience, each choice to forgive, each act of generosity becomes a note in God’s continuing love-song to the weary world. We are called to carry the music of heaven into a world that seems to have forgotten how to

hear it, and into the lives of those who desperately need to hear that they are loved.

May we hear the angels clearly—and may their love-song become our own this Christmas and always.

Rev Laura Symon

Readings for Advent 4

Isaiah 7 v 10-16, Psalm 80 v 1-7, 6-18, Romans 1 v 1-7, Mth 1 v 18-25

Christmas Day



O come let us adore Him

“Yea Lord we greet thee Born this happy morning” The opening line of the final verse of Oh Come All Ye Faithful, the verse we have held back from using through all our build up to Christmas morning.

I have to declare that when I am in church at midnight mass and this isn't the final hymn and verse then I am truly disappointed because I am someone who loves to hear the story and the singing and all that is Christmas...just as I have every year of my life.

As I get older then I find myself hanging onto those things more and more. This year Christmas will be different, only part of the family will be with us in our new home and the things we have always done in big church houses will be curtailed or adapted. I begin to realise why Christmas can become difficult for those whose traditions have been changed, who are no longer holders of the tradition and who now look back and not forward.

Yet Christmas is actually about looking forward to see “the word of the Father now in flesh appearing” So lets hold onto the things that can bring joy, care for those who need to look forward but who can only see the people and things that are missing and truly spend Christmas as a church family doing what we joyful should “Come let us adore him Christ the Lord”

The Most Reverend Doctor Mark Strange

Primus and Presiding Bishop of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Bishop of the
Diocese of Moray, Ross & Caithnes

May you know the
joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child
in your hearts and homes this Christmastime.



Produced by the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Board on behalf of the
Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness

