

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Introduction



Photo by Oscar Ivan Esquivel Arteaga on Unsplash

Scripture: John 1.1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

An Introduction to the Course

Welcome to 'In the beginning was the Word...' the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney Advent Course for 2023-2024. The course will start on Advent Sunday (3rd December 2023) and finish of the Baptism of the Lord (Sunday 7th January 2024).

Each day there will be a reflection (found in the 'other news' section of the Diocesan Website), focused on a theme word for the day and reflecting on that word and the Daily Eucharist scriptures. The presence of an Advent Course online follows a pattern of Lent and Advent courses over past years (Lent 2023, Lent 2022, Advent 2021, Lent 2021).

The theme words are taken from the global Advent Word project (part of the Forward Movement). These are based on the preceding Sunday's Eucharist readings (3-25 December). The words for 26 December – 7 January are based on the Gospel reading or commemoration for the day (chosen by the Diocesan Advisor for Christian Life). The Advent posts can be linked into the global network (Anglican and otherwise) as well as being rooted in Scripture.

The writers for each day are from across the Diocese, lay and ordained from the City, Shire, and Islands. They have been asked to provide an image to help us reflect, alongside offering music, prayers, questions and/or practices to help us walk through the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, focussing on waiting for Jesus, welcoming the infant Jesus and reflecting on Jesus as Light of the World.

Each Saturday there will be some reflective questions looking back at that week's posts, you might wish to use these as an individual or as a group.

We hope that this Diocesan Course will help you prepare for the incarnation of our Lord, waiting, watching and wondering as we make preparations of all kinds for the Season.

To pray

A Prayer for Advent by Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness,

send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day,

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

To listen

- *Wachet auf! ruft uns die Stimme* by J.S. Bach, one version is by Münchener Bach-Chor and Münchener Bach-Orchester
<https://open.spotify.com/track/1k82bzEjGy47GX0EbVPseH?si=bbd01a0e5f7944f7>
(The cantata was originally written for the 27th Sunday after Trinity; occurring immediately before Advent)
- *Hungry* by Kathryn Scott
<https://open.spotify.com/track/3rxry08jBA9i6BtO8rMXZr?si=0ca16da3fe9341c5>
(This worship song speaks of waiting for Jesus).

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.