



Christmas Words

An Advent to Candlemas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney

Door

Tuesday 31st December



Open Door by Antranian on Pixabay via WikiMedia

Scripture: John 1.1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

To reflect

Today is Hogmanay, New Year's Eve, the last day of 2025. A day where we prepare to close the door on one calendar year and open the door to another. Therefore, today's word for reflection is 'door'.

The Gospel reading set for the Daily Eucharist is John 1.1-18, perhaps heard on Christmas Day and is the Gospel for next Sunday (if Epiphany isn't celebrated early). It's a reading that speaks of beginnings - of Creation, of John preparing the way - opening the door for Jesus, of Jesus and other prophets. Of the doors that God opens for humanity to engage with God.

So as we prepare to enter the new calendar year, you're invited to reflect back on the year, your year in faith and reflect on how you wish to travel in your life of faith in 2025 and to be drawn into Jesus future next year.

To Pray – A Collect for New Year's Eve (from the Episcopal Church's Book of Occasional Services, 1994)

O, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
whose years never fail and whose mercies are new each returning day:
let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives,
warming our hearts and giving light to our minds,
that we may pass into the new year in joyful obedience and firm faith;
through him who is the beginning and the end,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing

Jesus, Lord of time: Hold us in your eternity
Jesus, image of God: Travel with us the life of faith
Jesus friend of sinners: Heal the brokenness of our world
Jesus, Lord of tomorrow: Draw us into your future. Amen

[From *New Patterns for Worship*, 2000]

Promise by Jackie Kay

Remember, the time of year
when the future appears
like a blank sheet of paper
a clean calendar, a new chance.
On thick white snow
You vow fresh footprints
then watch them go
with the wind's hearty gust.
Fill your glass. Here's tae us. Promises
made to be broken, made to last.

From A Poem for Every Day of the Year, edited by Allie Esiri (Macmillan, 2017)

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- 'Canticle of the Turning', one version is by Rory Cooney, Gary Daigle and Theresa Daigle. This is based on the Magnificat but speaks of the world about to turn, apt as the year is about to turn over.
- "The Old Year Now Away is Fled' (traditional) one version is by the Taverner Consort.
- 'Auld Lang Syne' (one version is by Dougie MacLean), the words of Robert Burns (1788) and a song of farewell, including to the old year. It begins by asking the questions *'Is it right that old times be forgotten?'*

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