

# Christmas message from The Church of Scotland

The Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sends his Christmas message to everyone today.

We are currently enjoying the season of Advent – a time of prayer and preparation for the coming of God's Son into the world.

God had promised a Messiah and generations had prayed and hoped for the Messiah to come.

The prophecies of his birth can be found in numerous places in the Old Testament in the Bible.

We read that it was to be in the town of Bethlehem, known as David's town and we know that there were to be signs.

But these were either ignored or missed completely.

And so, all 'the hopes and fears of all the years' were bound up in a little baby wrapped in what was traditionally referred to as 'swaddling clothes' and lying in a manger.

And the only people who visited were the shepherds and the Wise Men.

I recently discovered a completely blank post-it note in the pocket of one of my newly washed and ironed clerical shirts.

Whatever had been written on it, probably someone's name and address for visiting, was totally washed out and I haven't got a clue who I was meant to be visiting or where I was meant to be going.

Hopefully, I didn't miss an appointment with someone.

It's difficult to miss Christmas especially given that the adverts and all that go with them start so early but it's easy to miss what is truly at the heart of Christmas, and that is individuals, families, congregations and communities.

We've kept that appointment, as we've welcomed the gift of God given to us in Jesus Christ and having received that gift we are encouraged to share it.

For the message of Christmas is not simply an annual appointment.

Jesus brought into our world hope, peace, joy and love – represented by the candles lit on the four Sundays of Advent.

As we look around us, as we see the difficulties and tensions, the conflicts and wars, as we see the needs that exist all around us, this world of ours needs to experience those gifts of God: hope, peace, joy and love.

Be blessed this Christmas and I pray that there might be hope, peace, joy and love in the lives of everyone for we are all God's children.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, may the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.



The Rev Dr Shaw J Paterson of Strathaven Trinity Parish Church who is the Moderator designate for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2024-25.