

Alloa Baptist News Sheet 115

"Christmas in Three Words"

I once read a book entitled *Christmas in Three Words*. Afterwards, I began asking pupils at Christmas school assemblies: What three words would you use to describe Christmas? The responses were wonderfully varied. If you find yourself short of conversation on Christmas Day, try it! What words would you choose? Presents? Family? Happiness? Sadness? Relaxing? Stressful? These words reflect many people's experiences of Christmas.

For Christmas 2025, the three words I would choose are: **Hope, With, and Amazing**. For brevity, I will highlight only two—see if you can spot the third!

Hope

The carol O Holy Night contains these beautiful words: "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."

Christmas is about hope.

Hope beyond our troubles.

Hope beyond our weariness.

Hope beyond the darkness of this world.

Hope of a rescuer.

This hope was foretold hundreds of years earlier—the hope of a king who would rescue his people, a king born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2,4), who would be called Immanuel: God **with** us (Isaiah 7:14).

Isaiah's promise came during dark times, when God's people longed for rescue from despair and weariness. God assured them of a sign—a sign of hope for the nations.

Christmas is about Jesus entering this world bringing hope:

bringing life in the face of death.

shining shine light in the midst of darkness.

giving peace in the chaos of life.

If you are searching for hope this Christmas, look to Jesus—the only hope for a broken world.

Amazing

When you pause to reflect, Christmas is truly amazing. It marks the moment in history when God came to earth—the Immanuel of Isaiah 7:14, God **with** us.

No wonder people were astonished when the shepherds shared what they had seen.

As Luke records: "When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (Luke 2:17–18).

And what did the shepherds witness?

An angel appearing in radiant brilliance at night, declaring: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10–12).

A host of angels praising God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests" (Luke 2:14).

A baby in a manger—the King of Kings, God **with** us, asleep. His name is Jesus, meaning he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

Consider the angels, their message, and its impact. No wonder people were amazed. God came down to earth. There is nothing more amazing than that—except perhaps that the same God would later die on a cross.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, on this first Sunday of Advent, we praise and bless you for a season in which we celebrate your great faithfulness and immeasurable generosity. You have sent Jesus to us, and you have given Jesus for us. Promises you make are always promises you keep, and we are deeply grateful. Enflame our hearts, Father. Help us to engage with the story of Jesus' birth with childlike wonder and renewed hope. Bring familiar Scriptures alive in fresh and transforming ways. Reshape how we celebrate Christmas this year by the truth and grace of the gospel. Over the coming weeks, show us once again how Jesus is a most wonderful, merciful Saviour—Immanuel, the God who is truly with us and profoundly for us. So very Amen we pray, with Advent longings, in Jesus' matchless and merciful name. (Adapted from Prayers for Advent)

Jimmy King, pastor

DIARY FOR NOVEMBER - JANUARY 2026

Sunday 30th November 1st Sunday of Advent

10:45 Rev. J King

Topic: "God With Us" Reading: Matthew 1:18-24

Evening 6:30 Deacons



Sunday 7th December

10:45 Rev. J King

Topic: "Song of Mary" Reading: Luke 1:26-38

Evening 6:30 Rev. J King - Reflection and Communion

Sunday 14th December

10:45 Rev. Jim McFarlane Communion

Evening 6:30 Deacons

Sunday 21st December

10:45 Rev. J King

Topic: "Christmas Celebration" - with Sunday School

Reading Luke 2:8-21

Evening 6:30 Rev. J King – Reflection and Communion

Christmas Card Delivery

Post your Christmas cards in the red box in the Foyer on Sunday 7, 14 and 21 and some willing helpers will distribute them within the fellowship.

Wednesday: Christmas Eve Carol Service 7pm



Sunday 28th December

10:45 Rev. J King

Topic: "Song of Simeon"

Evening 6:30- Deacons

Reading: Luke 2:22-40

Sunday 4th January 2026

10:45 Rev. J King

Topic "God of Grace" Reading: Jonah 4

Evening 6:30 Rev. J King – Reflection and Communion



For your prayers:

Irene Sneddon - Jean Thomson - Ann Douglas - Margaret McQueen – Margaret Lindsay

Margaret Gardiner in Parklands Care Home

Margaret Marshall in Hospital (A 21)