

**Call to Prayer: Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent**  
**Prayer @ 7pm**

The words of the angel to Mary bring this assurance: ‘The Lord is with you.’ (Luke 1: 28) The words are clear and unequivocal: ‘The Lord is with you.’

Nevertheless, Mary is ‘perplexed’ and clearly fearful as she tries to comprehend the words spoken to her. The message of the angel that she is to become the bearer of the Christ-child leads her to ask: ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ In response, the angel speaks of the promise of the Spirit and Mary affirms and embraces the promise: ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ (Luke 1: 26-38) It is as if Mary hears and embraces the first words spoken to her: ‘The Lord is with you.’

As we come near to the point where the promise of the Advent season is fulfilled in the birth of the Christ-child, we are conscious of the renewed challenges we face within the communities of which we are a part. In the face of this, each one of us longs to know the assurance of the promise: ‘The Lord is with you.’ In the perplexities and challenges of the times, and to each one of us, the words of assurance are spoken. The Lord *is* with us and we are invited to embrace the promise of the Christ-child who is to come. We pray:

Lord, draw near to us  
And to all who long to hear your Word.  
We give thanks that the promise of the Advent season  
Will soon be fulfilled in the birth of the Christ-child.  
May we embrace the promise and share in the hope it brings.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

Lord, draw near to us  
And to all who long to hear your Word.  
We pray for the lonely and the perplexed;  
For the anxious and the fearful.  
Be near to them as you are to us.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

Lord, draw near to us  
And to all who long to hear your Word.  
We pray for the families and communities of which we are a part  
And for our Nation.  
Sustain us in these times and renew us in times to come.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

Lord, draw near to us  
And to all who long to hear your Word.  
We give thanks that, in all things, you are with us  
And we embrace once more the promise of the Christ-child.  
May the light of Christ shine in the darkness and bring hope to the world.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

Signed by:

Rt. Rev. Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly, Church of Scotland

Most Rev. Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Roman Catholic Church

Most Rev. Mark Strange, Primus, on behalf of the College of Bishops, Scottish Episcopal Church

Rev. John Fulton, Moderator, United Free Church of Scotland

Rev. Lindsey Sanderson, United Reformed Church (Scotland)

Rev. Martin Hodson, General Director, Baptist Union of Scotland

Rev. Mark Slaney, District Chair, Methodist Church (Scotland)

Rev. May-Kane Logan, Chair, Congregational Federation in Scotland

Lt. Col. Carol Bailey, Secretary for Scotland, Salvation Army

Adwoa Bittle, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Rev. Claire Fender, District Superintendent, British Isles North District, Church of the Nazarene

Pastor Chris Gbenle, Provincial Pastor, Province of Scotland, Redeemed Christian Church of God

Bishop Francis Alao, Church of God (Scotland)/Minority Ethnic Churches Together in Scotland (MECTIS)

Rev Fred Drummond, Director, Evangelical Alliance (Scotland)