



Aberuthven and Dunning

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Aberdalgie and Forteviot

5 December 21



# welcome to worship !

424 1 Blest be the everlasting God  
the Father of our Lord!  
Be his abounding mercy praised,  
his majesty adored!

2 When from the dead he raised his Son,  
and called him to the sky,  
he gave our souls a lively hope  
that they should never die.

3 To an inheritance divine  
he taught our hearts to rise;  
'tis uncorrupted, undefiled,  
unfading in the skies.

4 Saints by the power of God are kept,  
till the salvation come:  
we walk by faith as strangers here,  
but Christ shall call us home.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,  
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We praise You, Eternal God, that as we start this Christmas month,  
we do so realising that

- You have come to bring certainty to a world which needs certainty
- You have come to bring peace to a world which needs peace
- You have come to bring joy to a world which needs joy
- You have come to bring hope to a world which needs hope
- You have come to bring love to a world which needs love

We give thanks that Your hope is a living lively hope,  
and so we pray that our minds may be open to take in the implications that You are living

- hands may be open to receive and share Your peace
- lives may be open to receive and share Your joy
- contacts may be open to be shown Your hope
- hearts maybe open to pulsate with You love

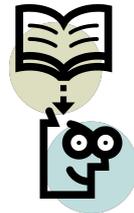
Prepare us for a Christ-filled Christmas

We pray in the name to Jesus to Whom with You O Father and the Holy Spirit be all praise  
and glory now and for ever Amen



## Isaiah 64.1-8

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,  
that the mountains would tremble before you!  
As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil,  
come down to make your name known to your enemies  
and cause the nations to quake before you!  
For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,  
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.  
Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.  
You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways.  
But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved?  
All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;  
we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.  
No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.  
Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.



## Romans 15. 1-13

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name."

Again, it says, Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

And again Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him."

And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up,

one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

470 1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
does its successive journeys run,  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

2 People and realms of every tongue  
dwell on his love with sweetest song,  
and infant voices shall proclaim  
their early blessings on his name.

3 Blessings abound where'er he  
reigns:  
the prisoners leap to lose their chains,  
the weary find eternal rest,  
and all who suffer want are blest.

4 Let every creature rise and bring  
the highest honours to our King,  
angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud amen.

According to a global survey of 10,000 teenagers published recently by Bath University :

- 54% of those in their teenage years have given up hope about the future of the planet
- 44% regularly waken in the night fearful about the future.

Against that backdrop, Christians have an incredible opportunity to bring hope, bring young people to the foot of the cross to find real, lasting hope and peace there.

This month people will be saying

I hope that the weather will be good at Christmas

I hope that 2022 will be a better year than the last two!

and will be followed by

We all know what is meant : hope = wish, there being a big element of uncertainty. However in the bible hope = expectation, longing for a certainty. Some weeks ago we saw dependance on God fulfilling His promises was like someone on night shift waiting for dawn, i.e. looking forward to a certainty, esp from a dark scenario.

The background to the reading from the old testament reading was that international scene was difficult, and society was plagued by injustices and tensions. In the midst was the cry "O that you would rend the heavens and come down"

There are many in times of difficulty who echo that cry of longing, Oh God help!



Expectation was fulfilled in Jesus. The good news of the Christian faith is that in Jesus God came help. We have made Saviour and salvation churchy words, but they were normal words meaning rescue. When someone is in trouble in the water, the helicopter does not shout down advice, but lowers the winch man right down into the water, making contact with the person in trouble. The person in trouble might be entangled in ropes needing to be freed by the winch man. Then the power of the helicopter lifts the casualty



So Christmas is not Blah Blah Blah ! God did something which is the basis of real **HOPE !** the record that in Jesus God entered the world, defeating sin that entangles us, making contact with us, and making God's power available to us.

This was the message with which Paul was encouraging the church in Rome, the political and social centre of the world at that time. What do we learn about hope ?

Source of hope : God of hope. Not hope=wish, but = expectation

Supply of hope : scripture endurance - examples of stickability,  
not solo encouragement - tone of Christian fellowship

Scope of hope : overflowing joy and peace  
God is not niggardly!

i. in the church As it overflowed brought together people from different backgrounds Jewish/Roman



In essentials unity  
In non-essentials liberty  
In all things charity

ii. in the community

as we celebrate Christmas this month, in the midst of the uncertainties  
we have the joyous privilege of letting God's hope overflow from us.

There are many who need to know this note of hope, to allow Jesus the rescuer to lift their  
lives above dependence on wishful thinking, to the certainty of Christian hope.

My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
all other ground is sinking sand,

2 In ev'ry rough and stormy gale,  
my anchor holds within the vale.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
he then is all my hope and stay.

As we give thanks for the firm basis of our hope,  
we realise that there are many who need this note of hope



globally we think of refugees who are longing for something to call home  
we think of those caught up in the tensions of civil war who are longing for peace  
we think of those who are suffering from preventable illness who long for medicine.  
and pray for those who are trying to bring practical help and hope to them

locally we think of some who may be known to us individually and need hope  
who are facing terminal illness and those who are supportive in palliative care  
who are caught up in addiction to alcohol, drugs or gambling  
and need to know Your power at work in their lives  
who are dependant on their image or popularity and need a note of real security  
who are feeling a failure that they may know that they are valuable to You  
who are searching for meaning in life, and those are sharing the good news of Jesus  
Help us that this month we may have opportunity to show and share the message of Jesus

And hear us as we sum up our prayers in the prayer Jesus taught saying "Our Father ...."

All my hope on God is founded,  
all my trust he shall renew;  
safe through change and chance He guides me  
only good and only true:  
God unknown, he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

Day by day our mighty giver  
grants to us his gifts of love;  
in his will our souls find pleasure,  
leading to our home above:  
love shall stand at his hand,  
joy shall wait for his command

Human pride and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray his trust;  
though with care and toil we build them  
tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power, hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.

Still from earth to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done;  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ his Son:  
hear Christ's call, one and all -  
those who follow shall not fall.