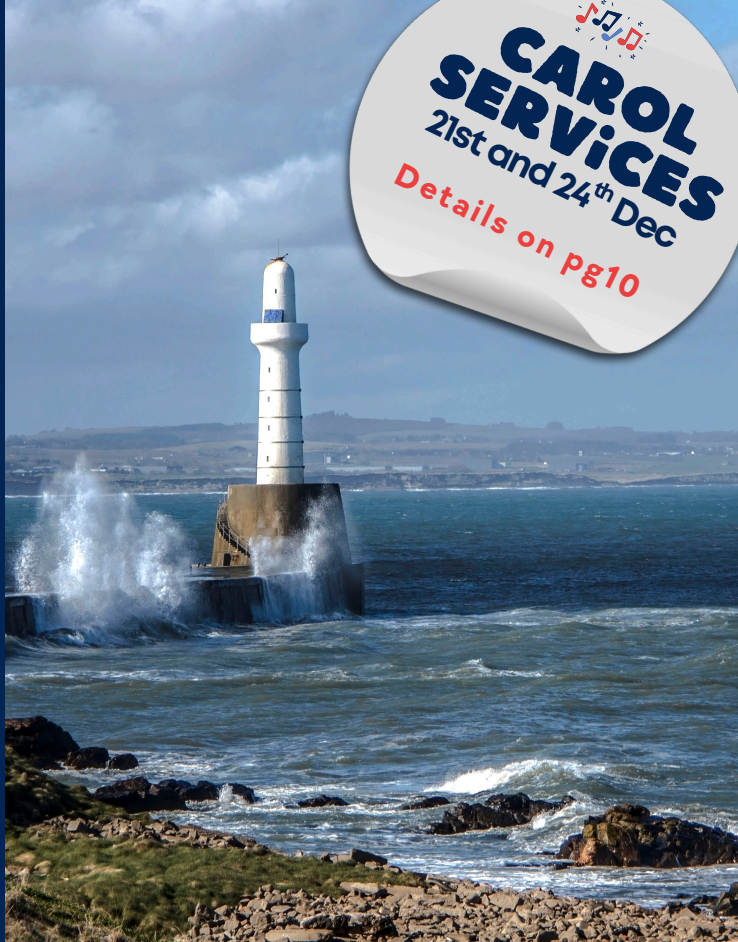


RIVERSIDE QUARTERly

Issue

14.

Winter 25/26

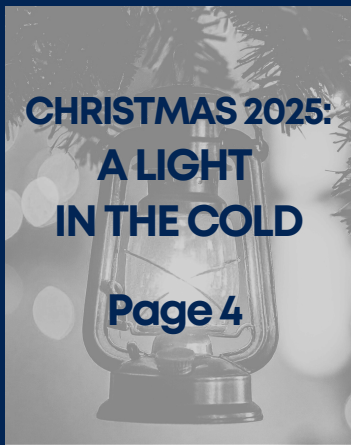


CHRISTMAS 2025:
A LIGHT
IN THE COLD

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THE FIRST
CHRISTMAS

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Welcome

Welcome to the final edition of the Riverside Quarterly for 2025. As usual at this time of year we focus on the coming into the world of Jesus Christ. In a society that has lost touch with the roots of the Christmas message we invite you to take a few minutes to read this edition and reflect on what His coming means for you.

What we believe about... the coming of Christ Jesus into the world:

- it was **prophesied**; the details of how Christ would come were so clear in the Old Testament that nobody could have arranged their birth to fit the facts. The bible prophesied many hundreds of years before He was born that the Christ would be from Israel (Gen.12.3), from the tribe of Judah (Gen.49.10), through a virgin (Isa.7.14) and be born in Bethlehem (Mic.5.2)
- it was **pictured**; not only did Old Testament prophecy declare facts about His coming, Old Testament pictures and symbols gave depth and detail to it. These include Moses who was sought after to be slain as an infant just like the Lord Jesus and the feast of tabernacles in Sept / Oct which very likely pictured the time when Christ would come into the world as John declares in 1.14 of his gospel: 'the WORD was made flesh and pitched His tent among us'. (Christians know it is extremely unlikely Christ was born on December 25th but choose to celebrate it then)
- it was **purposeful**; the most critical aspect of the coming of Christ Jesus is why He came. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is the summary declaration in 1Tim.1.15 and points us to the real reason for it all. He came to die for others. As the carol states He was 'born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth'. The coming of Christ is the salvation plan of God for sinners in action. And whatever else fills your diary and captures your attention at this time of year, that is always the most important thing about Christmas.

Whats on?

SUNDAY

- **9:30am** Breaking of Bread

Coffee @11:15am

**BIBLE
FOR
ALL**

11:30am

Creche available

- 4:00pm Bible Teaching
- 4:00pm Sunday School
(both Term Time)

MONDAY

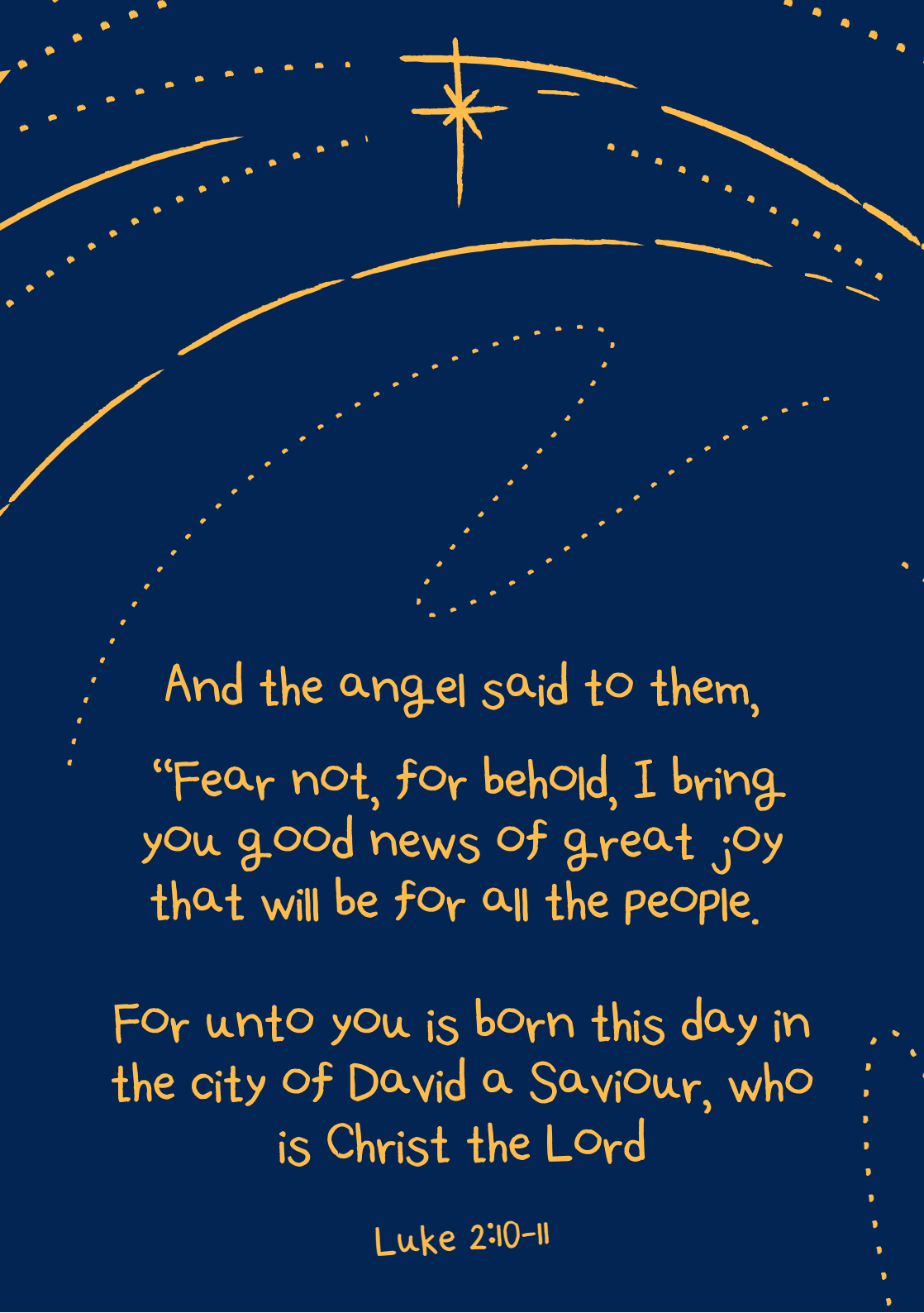
- 10.00am Toddlers (Term Time)
- 8:00pm Prayer Meeting

WEDNESDAY

- 6:30pm Kids Club (P1-6)
- 6:30pm Youth Club (P7-S2)
(both Term Time)
- 8:00pm Bible Teaching

COMMUNITY LUNCH

2nd Friday of each month
12:30pm (excluding Jul & Aug)

A hand-drawn illustration of a night sky. At the top center is a bright star with eight points, drawn with simple lines. Several curved lines, some solid and some dotted, sweep across the sky from the left towards the right, suggesting the movement of celestial bodies or the folds of a garment. The background is a solid dark blue.

And the angel said to them,
“Fear not, for behold, I bring
you good news of great joy
that will be for all the people.

For unto you is born this day in
the city of David a Saviour, who
is Christ the Lord

Luke 2:10-11



Christmas 2025

A LIGHT IN THE COLD

This Christmas comes at a time when many of us feel the chill, and not just because the nights in Aberdeen are long, cold, and sometimes snowy.

The world we live in has felt colder than usual this year. Rising prices at the supermarket. Energy bills that bite when we simply want to keep warm. Worries about jobs, pay, and how to make ends meet. And beyond our shores, wars, natural disasters, political turmoil, all remind us of how fragile life is.

And yet, in the darkest season, a most astonishing promise comes to us. Because the story of Christmas is not just for celebration.

It is, first and foremost, a message of hope for people in need.

When the angel declared to the shepherds over 2,000 years ago, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people," that message was for ordinary people living under hardship - taxed, oppressed, waiting for hope. The world then was full of brokenness, injustice, and longing. Sound familiar?

Today, the world is still full of brokenness, injustice, and longing. But the birth of one child, born in a lowly manger in Bethlehem, signals that God himself has stepped into our world, into our suffering, our uncertainty, our cold and poverty.

A Baby **BORN FOR US**

That child, born of a virgin, perfect and holy, was no ordinary baby. He was God come in human flesh: Emmanuel - "God with us." He came to live among us, to know hunger and pain, to face rejection, to grow up and walk among ordinary people.

Why did he come? Because humanity is broken. Since the beginning humans chose rebellion over obedience, sin has corrupted our hearts, our relationships, and our world. Sin brings death: spiritual separation from God, guilt, shame, and the deep existential fear that "this is all there is."

No amount of Christmas lights, no extra savings at the bank, no new job can truly fix that brokenness. Because the problem is inside us. We need something - someone - eternal.

That "someone" is Jesus Christ. He came to live a perfect life. And at the appointed time, He died on a cruel cross, taking the penalty for sin, as a righteous God punished Him for sins not His own. Then, on the third day, He rose again — proving that death has been defeated, and offering to every person the gift of eternal life.

The Hope we can Hold **WITHOUT PRETENCE**

This Christmas, maybe you're reading this and you feel cold inside. Maybe your hands are empty. Maybe you fear what next month brings. Maybe the world around you seems hostile and bleak.

The promise for you is forgiveness. If you come to Christ, he wipes away your guilt. To you we bring the same message the angels brought long ago: "Good news of great joy - for you."

He restores your relationship with God. He fills your emptiness with his love. He gives you a hope that doesn't fade when the lights go out, or when the bills arrive.

And not just hope for tomorrow, but a hope that lasts forever. A hope that says that no matter how dark, cold, or despairing life feels, there is light. A light that shines, not in spite of our problems, but into them.

Came to the **CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS**

If you are reading this and asking in your heart: "Is this really for me? Could this hope be real?", the answer is yes. Christ didn't come for the perfect, the rich, or the powerful. He came for people like you and me - ordinary, struggling, vulnerable. He came for people whose world has grown cold. He came so we might have warmth that lasts.

Know this: you don't have to wait until you've "got life sorted." You don't need a perfect record. You don't need to be "good enough."

All you need is to come. Come to him in honesty, in humility, in need, in repentance. The Bible says that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. And if you do - if you truly believe in him, as the Bible invites us to - then right now, you have the promise of eternal life, forgiveness, and a Father in heaven who welcomes you home.

This Christmas, let that hope shine. Share it. And let the warmth begin. Not with candles on the tree or presents under it, but with the heart of the message: The Son of God coming as a baby, dying for sinners, and then rising again to give life - to you.

The **THEOLOGY** of Christmas Carols



Hark! The Herald, Angels Sing

The Incarnation - God Becoming Man

Origin: Charles Wesley 1739, (adapted by George Whitefield)

Key Themes

Angels Announce Peace

Christ's birth brings peace between God and humanity.

God Becomes Human

Christ is God become man, coming to live among us.

Light & New Life

Christ brings healing, hope, and spiritual birth.

Promised Messiah

Titles like Prince of Peace and Sun of Righteousness show He fulfills ancient prophecies.

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace...” Luke 2:14)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Christ the Long-Awaited Deliverer

Origin: Based on “O Antiphons” used in early church liturgy

Key Themes

Waiting for a Saviour

The song represents people waiting for God to send a Deliverer.

Prophecies Fulfilled

Each verse uses an ancient title for Christ showing He fulfills Scripture.

Joyful Promise

The refrain says “Rejoice!” because Emmanuel will come and bring hope.

Freedom and Light

The carol asks God to rescue people from fear, sin, and spiritual captivity.

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14)



Christmas carols are more than festive melodies. Each familiar tune carries Bible based truths of hope, joy, and redemption.

Silent Night

The Peace of Christ in a Broken World

Origin: Written by Joseph Mohr during a time of European unrest

A Holy, Peaceful Birth

Christ is born in humble quietness, the opposite of what the world deserves in its sin.

Key Themes

Son of God, Love's Pure Light

It teaches that Christ is the Son of God, bringing God's pure love to earth.

Peace for the World

Through Christ's birth, God's peace becomes available to all people.

Christ as the Light

The carol highlights Christ as the "holy light" who shines into human darkness.

"...an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them." (Luke 2:9)

Joy To The World

The world rejoices as God's presence brings hope and new life.

Origin: Written by Isaac Watts as a paraphrase of Psalm 98

Christ as King

The carol celebrates Christ's coming to Bethlehem which will ultimately lead to Him becoming King over all the world.

Key Themes

God Bringing Joy to All Creation

The whole creation rejoices in God's presence.

Christ's coming brings:

Freedom from sin
Hope for the broken
Peace for the world

A New Beginning

The song looks forward to a time when God's rule will bring complete restoration—no more sorrow, oppression, or suffering.

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth..." (Psalm 98:4)

The First Christmas

WRITTEN BY JOEL HAWTHORNE
FOR WWW.UNDERSTANDINGTHEGOSPEL.ORG



Christmas should be a time of year to get excited about. Time with friends and family, good food and gifts galore – what's not to love?

But the reality is that, for many, Christmas can be a difficult season. Reminders of lost loved ones and better times are painful. Financial pressures cause stress and worry.

The first Christmas, however, tells a story which can bring joy to us all.

What is Christmas about?

No, it's not all about the presents!

We all know the word “Christmas”, but do you know its true meaning? Literally, it means “Christ sent” or “Christ partaking” and speaks of the birth of Jesus, when God became a man.

Who was born?

The declaration that foretold His birth was “‘the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23). For centuries, the relationship between humans and God had been fractured.

We were severed from our Creator, dislocated from the one Being who could bring us true joy. But at the first Christmas, everything changed. In Christ, God not only came to us but became one of us so that the broken relationship could be remade.

Why was He born?

The story gets better – not only has God come to us, become one of us, He has come for us! The Bible explains the reason for Jesus's coming: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). The name Christ refers to God's long-promised Messiah, a deliverer who would come to rescue humanity from its plight. The reason humans are separated from God is simple – we choose to be. Our pride, selfishness and sinfulness demonstrate that we have refused Him in our lives. Life without God is ultimately meaningless and hopeless – we are alive physically but dead spiritually.

The good news is that Jesus was born so we could be born again. The true Christmas story is not just that God came to be with us temporarily, but that, through Jesus, we can be with God eternally.

How can I be born again?

In one sense, you cannot contribute to being born again any more than you contributed to being born naturally. Eternal life comes to us, not because we are good, but because Jesus, who was and is absolutely good, gave His life for us. His perfect life and sacrificial death on the cross mean that through faith in Him we can receive eternal life.

Being born again is a gift and you receive it in the same way you receive any other gift – simply by taking it. However, a gift can also be refused – if we do not want what is offered – but in this case there are consequences for that. The Bible sums it up: "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

You can enjoy the gift of God or regret refusing it forever – the choice is yours. This Christmas, ensure that, for you, it truly is a season of joy by receiving Christ as your Saviour. Even if a dark cloud hangs over the season, His promise is: "you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:22).



Join us for our **CAROL SERVICES**

on
SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER

4PM - 5PM

and
WEDNESDAY 24TH DECEMBER

6PM - 7PM

All Free of charge

No collection is ever taken at our services



Bring along your family and friends to join us for singing, festive refreshments and considering more about why Christ came into the world.

All ages welcome!

**Riverside Christian Assembly,
Spires Business Park,
Mugiemoss Road
ABERDEEN**



2025

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good

Looking back on 2025, the Christians who meet at Riverside Christian Assembly have *many reasons to give God thanks.*

The life of a local church is organic, and dynamic, as the people who make up the church have lives that ebb and flow with changing circumstances and experiences. *But our God never changes* and our aim in all that we do remains to glorify God and to bless the people around us in His Name.

Through 2025 we have consistently gathered to worship and pray, on Sundays and Mondays, *with heartfelt thankfulness and a genuine dependence* on The Lord for all that we do. Our systematic bible teaching program, on Sundays and Wednesdays, has taken us through Joshua where we learned the importance of following the Lord, through Mark's gospel where the *greatness of Christ* has been emphasised and 1 Corinthians where the issue of pride and its consequences has challenged all of us. We have also studied the attributes of God and closed the year with some thematic teaching on the subject of marriage, a *blessing from God* to humanity that is systematically undervalued in our society. Our gospel outreach work has included term time toddlers, children and teenage work as well as special weeks of meetings and bible studies as we seek to bring the *good news of Jesus Christ* to people in different ways.

We have seen some of our members married, some join and some leave with employment changes and some of our young people make progress in their faith through *baptism and joining the church*. And through it all we have supported each other in the Christian life, sharing in life fellowship in practical everyday life.

We close the year with a *thankful spirit* and with a clear vision for 2026. May the Lord continue to work in us, among us and through us until He comes or calls us home.



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

Get in touch if you would like

- a free Bible
- a study course
- to find out more

WWW.THERIVERSIDE.CHURCH

Visit our website where you can



Contact us



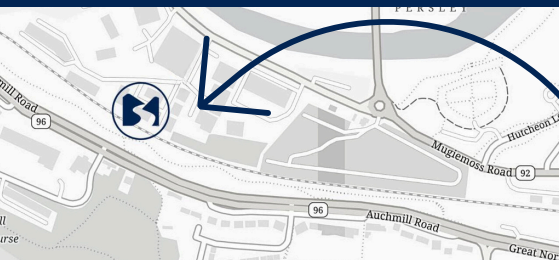
Find out more about us and what we believe



Learn more about what's on



View previous Quarterlys and sign up to our mailing list



RIVERSIDE

Christian Assembly

Unit 20
Spire Business Park
Mugiemoss Road
AB21 9BG



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