

# The true light

John Witcombe *reflects on* Isaiah 9:1-4,  
1 Corinthians 1:10-18 and Matthew 4:12-23



**E**piphany is when we hear stories of God being revealed in the world – and when we ask for God to be revealed in our own lives. In today's readings we are encouraged to trust that, no matter how dark, the true light will always shine – whether in the world, or in the Church. The first two readings for today recognise that the people of God will sometimes find themselves walking in darkness, whether in the world (Isaiah) or even in the Church (Paul, in the letter to Corinth). Just as the world can feel a dark place because of violence and oppression, so even a local church can be a place where the darkness of disagreement and conflict can cloud the horizon.

Jesus speaks to us through the words of the Gospel, calling us to repent, to turn away from darkness and seek the light. If we are to follow him, it will always mean leaving something of our old life behind – and that's never going to be easy. It could be that the place where we are feels too dark to find the path forwards, so we just don't know where to tread. These are times to ask God to make it clear, step by step. As we take single steps forward, following God's voice, the darkness will

fade to grey and God's light will start to shine. The Magi followed a star: we follow the light of Christ, which the darkness will never extinguish. 🕯️

**Holy God, you call us to step out of darkness into your marvellous light. Help us all, even those who find it hard to see the way, to find the path that leads back to you and your life for each of us. Amen.**

## The indigenous people of Australia

*Max Serjeant concludes his series about Aboriginal culture and Christianity.*

Australian missions have played a role in Aboriginal history going back to the arrival of the first European settlers. For some they were part of the colonial machine which dispossessed them, while for others they introduced them to their Christian faith and provided shelter from less well-intentioned colonists.

Life within the missions could be hard, and sometimes children were taken there against the will of their parents. Despite this, plenty of Aboriginal people look back on their mission days fondly and have positive memories of the missionaries they lived with.

Most of the missions had fallen out of use by the 1960s and the buildings were left to crumble. Today, however, some have been given a new lease of life through the outstation movement. Looking to escape the pressures of urban life and reconnect with their traditional culture, many Aboriginal people have returned to their ancestors' lands and make their communities in the very missions where they or their parents spent earlier parts of their lives. 🕯️

## Holocaust Memorial Day

by Caroline Fletcher

27th January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, is Holocaust Memorial Day, when we remember all those who were murdered by the Nazis. About six million Jews died in the Holocaust and information about many of them is contained on the Database of Shoah Victims' Names. This is being compiled by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, to ensure

that the individuals behind the figures are not forgotten.

The Center exists to remember people such as Sara and Yehuda, a Hungarian couple who were murdered at Auschwitz on May 25, 1944. The database reveals that their nine children and Yehuda's brother, wife and their children were also slaughtered at the same time: a whole family wiped out in a day.

The Yad Vashem website says that about 430,000 Jews were deported from Hungary to mainly Auschwitz between May and July 1944, just like Sara and Yehuda. Most were sent straight to the gas chambers. May we never forget them. 🕯️

“ Let your holy home be your heart.   
 Lailah Gifty Akita, author

## Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

**Interim Moderator:** Rev June Freeth 721449

**Locum Minister** Rev Martin Prentice    **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

**A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.**

### Intimations

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan – 7pm** – Fellowship. Come along and join in the discussion or just come along and listen.

**8pm** – Choir

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan – 10am – 12noon** Community Café in the kirk hall

**27th January - 1st February 2020** Blue Door: Goods can be delivered directly to the shop anytime during the week. Thank you.

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> January – 7.30pm.** There are sessions about leading worship in the Milestone kirk in Dounby, led by Linda Broadly, locum minister.

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February – 7pm** Trustees/Session Meeting

### **Readings:**

1 Corinthians 1:10-18      Matthew 4:12-23

### **Hymns:**

H123 God is love, let heaven adore him

H739 The Church's one foundation

H721 We lay our broken world

Junior Praise 123 "Fishers of Men"

H533 Will you come and follow me

### **"Fishers Of Men"**

I will make you fishers of men

fishers of men

fishers of men

I will make you fishers of men

If you'll follow me

If you'll follow me

If you'll follow me

I will make you fishers of men

If you'll follow me

**Doxology** Hymn 786