



## Week 1 – Unlocking the potential of our history

Looking back can often be portrayed as a negative thing, and will be if all it does is locks us into tradition or causes us to hanker after times now past. But as we look back to the early stories of God’s people, we are reminded that this world is no mere accident and that God is not indifferent to its plight.

If we are to realise our potential for God, it begins by believing that God has a purpose for us, and the world he has made. We are not simply called to stand by, nor are we limited by what can be achieved in our strength alone.

Our world has the potential to be different, and the narratives on which our faith is founded remind us of this again and again. Advent reminds us that while God’s Kingdom has yet to fully come, there is much that can be done in the here and now.

We look to a present that is beset by struggle, but we still believe. We believe because the God who had led and sustained his people continues to be present in their midst. In the stories from our past, there are many moments when things did not make sense, when the road that was hard and painful to tread, was the one that led to the place of redemption and hope. We choose to believe, not because we can make sense of our present circumstances or even see a clear way ahead, but because we stand as part of a bigger story – we inherit the hope and the testimony of those who have walked this way before.

**This flame of hope is ignited  
To cast its light on the road we have travelled  
For the very light that we have kindled  
Exists only because our God once declared that it should be.**

**And though we struggle to make sense of the world that surrounds us  
And pathways ahead are shrouded in uncertainty and foreboding  
We will not surrender to despair or indifference  
For God's purpose prevails, even when obscured by our expectations.**

**Its light draws our eyes away from the darkness;  
The confusion and struggles of this earthly journey  
Not to escape or ignore their reality  
But to remember that in every circumstance God is present**

**And spurred by the stories of God's hand in our history  
Inspired by the example of those who have been caught up in his purpose  
We open ourselves to be servants of the most high  
To embrace the present assured of God's faithfulness**

