

### Preaching Dates

#### 17 December

**Irene Campbell** (am) at Westwood Baptist Church, East Kilbride

**Willie Henry** (am) at Cambuslang Baptist Church

**Tony Walters** (am + pm) at Fort William Baptist Church

**Jim McNulty** (am + pm) at Islay Baptist Church

#### 19 December

**Florence Mackenzie** (pm) at International Students' Christmas Event, The Mission, Aberdeen



### "Light of the World"

By Fiona Merriweather

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined." Isaiah 9:2

These familiar words took on fresh meaning to me recently when I had the privilege of visiting Gujarat in North India, the home state of Mahatma Gandhi. Our travels took us to the city of Junagadh, home to half a million people with alters to Hindu Gods everywhere you look, and free roaming cows mingling with the traffic, also considered deities. A large mosque, a Catholic chapel and three small churches founded by Irish missionaries completed the worship menu.

Just outside the city in the Girnar hills is an important pilgrimage site, known as the 10 000 steps. This is a paved mountain walk with many temples and shrines on the way. The final peak is extremely steep; at over 3000 feet it is as high as a Scottish Munro. Many of the pilgrims are old and infirm, yet choose to walk barefoot as this is considered more holy. Some pay to be carried. They go to make offerings at the shrines and ask for blessing, yet it all seemed so empty to our eyes. The huge physical effort to reach the top culminated in a few minutes to pay homage to an idol flanked by two unfriendly priests and a watchful security guard. They gave but received nothing that we could see, not even a word of gratitude.

It brought the stories of the Acts of the Apostles alive to see these scenes. We could have been on Mars Hill. We prayed as we walked, seeking to bring the presence of God, blessing the friendly pilgrims as we went. In contrast to the gaudy temples the grandeur of the mountains was breathtaking, for we were in God's cathedral, where "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork." At this time of Advent, we thank God for sending the Light of the World.