



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

10 & 11 am – Sunday 29th November 2020

Sunday services are conducted today at 10 & 11 am and at 6 pm

by our minister, Rev Angus MacRae. Tel: (01463) 832616.

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This is a guide to our two **Sunday Morning Services**, held live in-person at the Free North Church. Morning Service is broadcast online the Free North YouTube channel at 11 am. The **“Sundays at 6”** evening service is on YouTube only at 6 pm. Both broadcast services are available afterwards for catch-up on YouTube. Subscribe to our channel: youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness.

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (from Isaiah 9)

Minister: *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.*

All: *‘For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.*

*And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.*

HYMN: O COME, O COME IMMANUEL

O Come, O Come, Immanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
*Rejoice, rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai’s height,
In ancient times did’st give the law
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.

O come, Thou Day-Spring, from on high
and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

*Words John Mason Neale (1851) based on an ancient Latin
text, ‘Veni, veni, Immanuel’. Version by Red Mountain
Music from their album ‘Silent Night’ sung by Ashley
Spurling. CCL License No. 616262. Streaming No. 324811.*

PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER

Praying for sister churches in BADENOCH, and LONDON CITY.

CHRISTMAS HOPE - VIDEO PROJECT

What does hope mean to you this Christmas? We’d love to get a short (30-40 second) clip of as many people in the church family as possible answering that question, so we can share the certain hope we have with family and friends this Christmas. Send your clips to Carrie, or get in touch with her if you have questions or need help recording, on 07583498782 or carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2020

Advent Resources with daily readings and prayers are available for personal or family use during December. We have Chocolate Advent Calendars for the children and kits from the Scottish Bible Society to help folk create window displays telling the Christmas Story. With a bit of artwork and colouring, you can remind the people in your street of the first coming of Jesus. Copies of a Christmas edition of Luke's Gospel are also available to give away or enclose with a card or Christmas gift. Please use as many of these resources as you can. Our Bible Teaching and songs over the four Sunday mornings of Advent will explore the gospel themes of some of the best known and best loved Christmas carols. We plan to make an online Carol Service available for Christmas eve, and would love to have some volunteer readers of all ages to record segments for the service. A short video will be made available to share or show a friend or house guest over the festive period.

BIBLE READINGS: ISAIAH 7:1-2,10-14 & -71

Isaiah 7:1-2,10-14. When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it. ² Now the house of David was told, 'Aram has allied itself with Ephraim'; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind... ¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.' ¹² But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.' ¹³ Then Isaiah said, 'Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18-25. ¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us'). ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

SERMON: MATTHEW 1:22-23 – LONGING FOR HOPE

We start our Advent sermon series with the words of "*O Come, O Come Immanuel*", an ancient carol filled with longing for the arrival of the Saviour. In our day we are still waiting for God to draw near to us in Jesus every day, and we wait for the return of Jesus to end all darkness forever. Advent means arrival or coming, and we rightly long for the arrival of Jesus. **1). CAROLS FOR A WORLD OF LONGING.** The Angel revealed to Joseph that Mary's son should be called Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins. The angel also called him Immanuel, God with us, the one who fulfils the promised sign of Isaiah 7:14. The advent carol we think about today uses these and many other special names for Jesus, including 'Lord of might', 'Rod of Jesse', 'Dayspring' and 'Son of God'. We can rejoice in the person and work of Jesus, our Immanuel. **2). CAROLS FOR THE DAWNING OF JOY.** God being born as a man is a fear-draining miracle. Joseph was told not to fear to take Mary as his wife, and her child Jesus is the source of all joy. Mary's joy and praise in Luke 1 was tied to the Dayspring rising to shed light in our dark world. The way Matthew's gospel uses the name Jesus (a name mostly used by God or the gospel writer rather than human characters) suggests that God has joy and delight in addressing his Son as the Saviour of the world. At the end of 2020 our world needs a Saviour. Promised vaccines are good, but our hope in Jesus is even better. This Christmas we can experience

a mixture of sadness and joy as we confidently wait for Jesus, our Saviour. In faith we cry and sing these words of invocation, "O come, O come, Immanuel!"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious Lord Jesus, our hope for peace depends on your coming.
We are a sinful people, have mercy on us. Come to help and save us.
You are the eternal Word made flesh, we wait for your peace and grace.
Even so: Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

PSALM 116:13-19 (SCOTTISH PSALTER)

I'll of salvation take the cup,
on GOD's name will I call:
I'll pay my vows now to the LORD
before his people all.

Dear in GOD's sight is his saints' death.
Thy servant, LORD, am I;
Thy servant sure, thine handmaid's son:
my bands thou didst untie.

Thank-off'rings I to thee will give,
and on GOD's name will call.
I'll pay my vows now to the LORD
before his people all;

Within the courts of GOD's own house,
within the midst of thee,
O city of Jerusalem.
Praise to the LORD give ye.

John MacAulay & Chris MacLeod, recorded at the Free North Church. Words: The Scottish Psalter, 1650.

BENEDICTION

SUNDAY AT SIX, live evening worship on our YOUTUBE CHANNEL, from 6 PM tonight.
Christ's Gifts to His Church - Ephesians 4. (There is a Zoom fellowship next Sunday 6th December).

CARRIE MARLOW - WOMEN'S PASTORAL WORKER – BIBLE STUDY UPDATE & CONTACT DETAILS

The **Women's Bible Study** on Thursdays at 10.30am and 7.45pm. We are looking at Zechariah's song in Luke 1:5-25 and 57-80. Get in touch with Carrie for the Zoom details: carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org or 07583 498782. Please also pass on any pastoral needs and referrals.

DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

IN-PERSON WORSHIP AT THE FREE NORTH: From today we are trying a new pattern of in-person services. There will be **TWO morning services** each Sunday, the first at 10 am (open to all and meeting in the Hall for around 40 minutes) and the second at 11 am, meeting in the church (still subject to a weekly alphabetical split by surname). The split pattern in the next few weeks is: Sundays 29th November and 13th & 27th December - surnames **Macl to Z**. Sundays 6th & 20th December and 3rd January - surnames **A to MacK**. Sunday School is only available at the 11 am service. Families with children are welcome to attend each Sunday. Visitors and folk who cannot attend when it is their "turn" will be welcomed whenever they are able to attend. We do not wish to exclude anyone who wishes to attend or to put pressure on anyone to return, for example if they are in a high-risk group or have health concerns. Online worship will continue to be provided at 11 am and 6 pm each Sunday for those worshipping at home. Access to the morning services is by the Church Street Lane entrance. The 10 am service will exit by the Church Hall lane leading to Church Street to avoid congestion between those exiting and others arriving. **Please DO NOT attend church if you experience**

any symptoms of Covid-19. We continue to maintain a discrete record of all who attend for contact tracing. When you come to church try to arrive in good time and bring a face covering (unless exempt). If you need water bring your own bottle and any books, bibles, or children's toys and materials that you may require. Worshippers may be seated with other household members or with someone in their social "bubble".

Tuesday: The Kirk Session meets on Zoom at 7.30 pm, with the usual log-in.

Wednesday Prayer: Join us **online only** to pray on Zoom at 7.30 pm. Our prayer gatherings and Home Groups meet online only on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Use the usual Zoom log-on and passwords.

Thursday: Women's Bible Study, 10.30 am and 7.45 pm – see Carrie Marlow's note above for details.

Guys Groups: Meet on Zoom at 10 am and 7 pm on Monday 7th December ('Men Need Competence' – pages 95-108). Use the usual Zoom log-in. **Chris MacLeod** is running catch-up sessions for any who missed earlier studies. **Email Martin** at office@freenorthchurch.org for details of **Chris MacLeod's Zoom meetings**.

COMMUNION: We will share in communion at the 10 and 11 am services on Sunday 13th December. Contact the minister, any elder or our women's pastoral worker to discuss church membership. The bread and wine will be prepared following strict guidance for hygiene by a person with a Food Handling Certificate. Individual servings of bread and wine will be placed conveniently on tables in the hall or at the end of each pew in use from the outset of the service for the convenient use of communicants. This will prevent the need to pass common plates and cups around the building. If you require gluten-free bread, we suggest you bring this with you to the service to minimise handling.

Isles FM: Our minister was interviewed on the Glow radio programme which aired live last Thursday from 9 to 11 pm on Isles FM. The programme is repeated on Sunday afternoon from 2 pm and is available for 21 days on the Isles FM website (listen again service, replaying content from Thursday 26th November).

Prayer needs: Julie Ferguson is feeling a little stronger as she continues to receive palliative care at home. Keep in prayer Tina Fraser, Elise Murray, Fiona, Christina MacArthur and all others dealing with bodily and mental health issues and all who support and care for others. Pray for families coping with bereavement. Pray for our partners planting at Merkinch, particularly Claire Hall as she adjusts to life in Scotland.

Pray for those who are spiritually lost. Ask God to give us a sense of urgency for advancing His kingdom and to make us a people who persevere in prayer for those who are not yet Christians. Pray for opportunities to share our gospel hope this Christmas.

Pray that Bible Study and online group members find ways to meet up offline to encourage one another.

Give a Book this Christmas: Who might you be able to bless with a gift? CYC has a Christian bookstall with a selection of extremely reasonably priced Christmas cards and books for all ages. The Bookstall is open on Saturdays (2 – 4 pm), and on Tuesdays and Thursdays (10 – 11 am) with titles for children and adult titles. See the CYC Facebook page for more. Orders can be submitted to rfinlay@toucansurf.com if you are unable to visit (pay by cash or cheque). Parking may be available. Ring the bell at CYC for access.

If you need help of any sort, we would love to hear from you. Contact the minister (07 506 006 459; angusmacrae1967@gmail.com), any elder or deacon, or the church office (office@freenorthchurch.org).

Support the Free North: Donate through our website (PayPal logo), the offering box, or via our treasurer, Mrs Barbara Macphail, 31 Towerhill Avenue, IV2 5FX. (01463 794622, treasurer@freenorthchurch.org). You may wish to give a thanksgiving gift during November for the Free Church Disaster and Relief Fund.