



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

10 & 11 am – Sunday 20th December 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 on the Free North YouTube channel at 11 am.

Tonight we have a ***"Service of Readings & Carols for Christmas"*** on YouTube only at 6 pm.

Both broadcast services are available afterwards for catch-up on YouTube.

Subscribe to our YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness.

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (from Luke 2 & Isaiah 9)

Minister: We hear once again the Angels' Call to worship God.

**ALL: Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.**

*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: Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests. Amen.**

PSALM 98:1-2,4-9 (SING PSALMS)

O sing a new song to the LORD,
for wonders he has done;
His right hand and his holy arm
the victory have won.

The LORD declared his saving work
and made it to be known;
To all the nations of the world
his righteousness is shown.

Acclaim the LORD, O all the earth;
shout loudly and rejoice.
Make music and be jubilant;
to him lift up your voice.

With harp make music to the LORD;
with harp his praises sing.
With trumpet and with horn rejoice

before the LORD, the King.

Let earth, the sea and all in them
rejoice triumphantly.
Let streams clap hands and mountains sing
together joyfully.

Now let them sing before the LORD,
who comes to judge the earth;
He'll judge the world in righteousness,
the peoples in his truth.

*John MacAulay & Chris MacLeod,
recorded at the Free North Church.
Words from Sing Psalms, Free Church of Scotland,
2003.*

RHYME & SIGN (1)

God spoke through the prophets and said, “Do right, or be exiled for 70 years. And keep watching until the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, appears.”

PRAYER & LORD’S PRAYER

Praying for sister churches SCALPAY (Harris) & STIRLING.

BIBLE READING: LUKE 2:6-15 (READER MARTHA MACIVER)

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. ⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.’ ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’

HYMN: WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT

While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around.

‘Fear not!’ said he—for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind—
‘Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

‘To you in David’s Town this day
is born of David’s line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,
and this shall be the sign:

‘The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands
and in a manger laid.’

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:

‘All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace!
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.’

*Words Nahum Tate (1652-1715)
CCL License No. 616262. Streaming No. 324811.*

RHYME & SIGN (2)

After 400 years of silence, Jesus Christ appeared on earth. God’s Word became flesh; the angels sang and proclaimed his humble birth.

THE VISIT OF THE SHEPHERDS – SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE CHRISTMAS CANDY CANE – SANDY FINLAY

SERMON: THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS – MATTHEW 2:9-11

Isaac Watts took Psalm 98 and turned it into the carol, “Joy to the world, the Lord has come...” **1). WHERE CAN YOU FIND JOY THIS CHRISTMAS?** We find joy in the songs of both Old and New Testament believers.

Few are happier than those caught up in the birth of God's Son, Jesus, the source of lasting joy. **2). WILL YOU WELCOME CHRIST WITH JOY THIS CHRISTMAS?** Sin and God's righteous curse on Eden brings sadness, distress and death. Psalm 98 sings to the God of salvation. After the Exodus, his power to save is on display for every nation. Today the nations are called, with Mary, not to argue with God or to try to negotiate with God. Instead we must surrender to his wise plan for us in Jesus. As we surrender, we too will sing for joy.

WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE AT CHRISTMAS VIDEO

Thanks to Carrie Marlow, Shona MacLeod and all who contributed to the *Hope at Christmas* video project. Please share this widely with family and friends (<https://youtu.be/MmPiiNNLihs>).

HYMN: JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing!

Joy to the earth, the Saviour reigns!
Let men, their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow

far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

*Words by Isaac Watts. Melody by George Frederic Handel.
Recording courtesy of Emu Music. 2020, arranged by Philip
Percival, CCL Song # 7165525.
CCL License No. 616262. Streaming No. 324811.*

BENEDICTION

SUNDAY AT SIX – CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE on our YOUTUBE CHANNEL at 6 PM tonight.
(No Sunday night fellowships on Zoom until after the New Year).

We wish you all a peaceful and merry Christmas, and God's grace and blessing in the coming year. Thank you for supporting the life and witness of the Free North Church family over the past year. May God be honoured and praised by all his people across our city and nation and may many find faith in Jesus Christ in the days to come.

DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

CONGRATULATIONS to **Vikkie and Robbie Finlay** on the safe arrival of their beautiful daughter, **Nora Faith**, born in Sheffield on 15th December. Another grandchild for Ruth and Sandy. We hope they will all soon be able to meet each other and enjoy this new life, a gift from God.

IN-PERSON WORSHIP AT THE FREE NORTH: We now offer **TWO morning services** each Sunday, the first at **10 am** (in the Church Hall for 40 minutes, and open to all) and the second at **11 am** (in the church, still subject to a weekly alphabetical split by surname). The split pattern in the next few weeks is: Sundays 20th December and 3rd and 17th January - surnames **A to MacK**. Sundays 27th December and 10th and 24th January - surnames **MacL to Z**. 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 both 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 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). Bring your own water bottle and any books, bibles, or children’s toys and materials that you may require. Worshippers may be seated with household members or with someone in their social “bubble”.

Wednesday: Join us in the Church hall (or online on Zoom) for prayer and Bible Study this Wednesday 23rd December at 7.30 pm.

Next Sunday 27th December: Join us for morning worship in the hall at 10 am; in the Church at 11 am; and online on YouTube at 6 pm.

New Year’s Day: We meet for worship in-person at the Free North (and online on YouTube) for a short service at 11 am, as we take the first day of 2021 to dedicate ourselves to Christ and his word.

Carrie is taking a short break over Christmas to visit her parents in Cambridge. Angus plans to take the first Sunday in January off, when we will have guest preachers conducting our in-person and online services.

Congratulations to John MacAulay as he becomes Presbytery Clerk, and to **Brian Cameron** as he becomes our new Session Clerk. Pray for these men as they give leadership and serve the body of Christ.

Year-End Finances: A letter is available from the Treasurer giving an update on our giving to the central funds of the Free Church. Sincere thanks to all who have supported our work in this most difficult year. To donate visit our website (PayPal logo) or contact our treasurer, Mrs Barbara Macphail, 31 Towerhill Avenue, IV2 5FX. (01463 794622, treasurer@freenorthchurch.org).

Prayer: Pray for those for whom the Christmas period is a hard or lonely time, especially those far from family, those shielding or unable to get out in the winter weather. Pray that as a church family we would be eager to reach out to others, sharing hospitality and support as we are able. Pray for parents in our Church family, for patience and wisdom in raising their children, that they might grow as disciples and that their lives may be shaped by the gospel. Ask the Lord to help parents prioritise Sundays and prayer with and for their children. Pray for all who have been unwell and all who face difficulties in the coming year.

COMMUNION: We will share in Communion on Sundays 7th and 14th February 2021.

The Record magazine: We will order back-copies of the *Record* for subscribers who did not get their copies in 2020. These are available to download from: freechurch.org/resources/magazines. New subscriptions will run from January 2021. The Deacons’ Court have decided not to charge existing subscribers for their *Record* in 2021. Please advise Martin McLean at the Church Office to set up a new subscription.

Explore Daily Reading notes: Copies of *Explore* for January to March 2021 are now available to help with daily Bible reading. Suggested donation £3.

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).