



# **The Free North Church Inverness**

*a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland*

## **A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP**

**11 am – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

*Sunday services today at 11 am and at 6 pm are **ONLINE ONLY** and conducted by our minister, Rev Angus MacRae. Tel: (01463) 832616.*

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We have sadly been forced to suspend all live in-person Sunday worship at the Free North Church for the next three weekends (27<sup>th</sup> December to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 inclusive) to comply with public health restrictions announced by the Scottish Government. You will find Morning and Evening services on our YouTube channel at 11 am and 6 pm and available afterwards for catchup. (Subscribe to our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness](http://www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness)).

### **WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (from Isaiah 6 & Revelation 4)**

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; who was, and is, and is to come.  
You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power,  
for you created all things, and by your will they were created. Amen.**

### **PRAISE: FROM HEAVEN YOU CAME**

From heaven you came, Helpless babe,  
Entered our world, Your glory veiled;  
Not to be served but to serve,  
And give Your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,  
He calls us now to follow Him,  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,  
My heavy load He chose to bear;  
His heart with sorrow was torn,  
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said.

Come see His hands and His feet,  
The scars that speak of sacrifice;  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered.

So let us learn how to serve,  
And in our lives enthrone Him;  
Each other's needs to prefer,  
For it is Christ we're serving.

*Words & music Graham Kendrick © Thankyou Music (1983).*

*Sung by Chris MacLeod.*

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### **PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER**

**Praying for sister churches: SAINT COLUMBA'S (Edinburgh) & NORTH TOLSTA.**

### BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 6:1-13

<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.' <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.' <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' <sup>9</sup> He said, 'Go and tell this people: "'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'" <sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.' <sup>11</sup> Then I said, 'For how long, Lord?' And he answered: 'Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, <sup>12</sup> until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. <sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.'

### BIBLE READING: LUKE 2:22-32

<sup>22</sup> When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord'), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: 'a pair of doves or two young pigeons'. <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup> 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.'

### PRAISE: COME, BEHOLD THE WONDROUS MYSTERY

Come behold the wondrous mystery  
in the dawning of the King.  
He the theme of heaven's praises,  
robed in frail humanity.

In our longing, in our darkness  
now the light of life has come.  
Look to Christ, who condescended  
took on flesh to ransom us.

Come behold the wondrous mystery,  
He the perfect Son of Man.  
In His living, in His suffering  
Never trace nor stain of sin.

See the true and better Adam,  
Come to save the hell-bound man.  
Christ the great and sure fulfilment  
of the law; in Him we stand.

Come behold the wondrous mystery,  
Christ the Lord upon the tree.  
In the stead of ruined sinners,  
Hangs the Lamb in victory.

See the price of our redemption,  
See the Father's plan unfold;  
Bringing many sons to glory,  
Grace unmeasured, love untold.

Come behold the wondrous mystery,  
Slain by death the God of life;  
But no grave could e'er restrain Him,  
Praise the Lord; He is alive!

What a foretaste of deliverance,  
How unwavering our hope.  
Christ in power resurrected,  
as we will be when he comes.

*Words & Music: Matt Boswell, Michael Bleecker, Matt  
Papa, 2012. Song # 702628.  
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### SERMON: VISIONS OF GLORY – ISAIAH 6

Many of us optimistically expected 2020 to be a year of “vision”, focussed on growth and progress in the life of the churches. Instead we have all had to deal with the sadness, stress and challenge of a global pandemic. We end 2020 and begin 2021 with messages lifting our eyes up to look again on the glory of God, to fill our hearts with a fresh vision for the one who deserves our loyalty, love and worship at all times. **1). A VISION OF GOD (1-4).** Before Jesus Christ took a human body, literally no one could see God. A physical vision of his glory was fatal. Angels hide their faces from his brightness. The temple begins to disintegrate in Isaiah's vision – a vision not of God himself but of his throne, and his glorious robe. We are starved of God's glory and need to see it in the face of Jesus Christ. **2). A VISION LEADING TO CONFESSION (5).** God's holiness drives us to confess. Our culture needs to despair of itself and learn return to God. **3). A VISION LEADING TO CLEANSING (6-7).** God finds a way to clean Isaiah, and us, so that we can speak for His glory. The solution is the altar of the cross of Christ, not a coal from the altar in the temple. **4). A VISION LEADING TO COMMISSION (8-13).** Isaiah responded to God by saying, “Send me”. God still calls servants to share His glory with others. Who will our church serve and who will we speak to about our glorious Lord Jesus in 2021?

### PRAISE: PSALM 150a:1-6 (SING PSALMS)

Praise God in his holy temple;  
praise the LORD in heavens high.  
Praise him for his acts of power;  
praise him for his majesty.

Praise him with the sounding trumpet;  
praise him with the harp and lute.  
Praise with tambourine and dancing,  
praise him with the strings and flute.

Praise him with the clash of cymbals;  
with loud cymbals praise accord.  
Praise him, everything that's breathing!  
Hallelujah! Praise the LORD!

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

### BENEDICTION

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**SUNDAY AT SIX – VISIONS OF GLORY on our YOUTUBE CHANNEL at 6 PM tonight.**

*(No Sunday night fellowships on Zoom until after the New Year).*

We wish you all 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. Our minister is taking two weeks off at the start of 2021. Carrie will also be taking some time off during the Tier-4 restrictions.

## DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

**IN-PERSON WORSHIP AT THE FREE NORTH:** Our Sunday meetings are **ONLINE ONLY** for three Sundays (27<sup>th</sup> December to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 inclusive) to comply with public health restrictions announced by the Scottish Government. **We do plan to offer SOME SMALL GATHERINGS in the church hall for in-person worship. These will be on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> Dec. (7.30 pm); Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Jan. (11 am); Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> Jan. (7.30 pm); Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Jan (11 am). Up to 20 people may attend. 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 YouTube and Zoom) for prayer and Bible Study this Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 pm.

**Friday - New Year's Day:** The minister will conduct a short service at 11 am (online only on YouTube), as we take the first day of 2021 to dedicate ourselves to Christ and his word.

**Next Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January:** Services are online only. 11 am – Rev Innes MacSween. 6 pm – Rev Wesley Strebeck, of Christ the King PCA, Wilmington, North Carolina. Wes hopes to join the Merkinch church plant team in summer 2021.

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January:** Prayer & Bible Study Online only on Zoom. Usual log-in details.

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January:** Services are online only. 11 am – Donnie MacLeod. 6 pm – Rev Wesley Strebeck.

**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 church. Sincere thanks to all who have supported our work in this most difficult year. To donate visit our website or contact our treasurer, Barbara Macphail. (01463 794622, [treasurer@freenorthchurch.org](mailto:treasurer@freenorthchurch.org)).

**Prayer:** Pray for those for whom the festive period is a hard or lonely time, especially with tighter tier-4 restrictions on meeting family and friends. 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, even when worship is online. Pray for all who have been unwell and all who face difficulties in the coming year.

Ardnamurchan Free Church in has produced a short service of readings and carols in English and Gaelic. Anyone interested in listening can find it at: <https://youtu.be/Se0AueTOb6M>.

**The Record magazine:** 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 for January to March are now available to help with daily Bible reading. Suggested donation £3. Contact Angus or Effie if you would like a copy posted through your letterbox.

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