



# SUNDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021

**SERVICES ARE AT 11 AM & 6 PM** (both online & in-person).

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## WELCOME TO THE FREE NORTH CHURCH, BANK STREET, INVERNESS

Welcome, especially if you are with us for the first time or are taking time to explore the Christian faith. We would love to help you to belong to the Christian family and we offer courses, small groups and resources to help. We usually stand for our praise songs and sit for other items of worship. Refreshments are served in the church hall after both services. Younger children will be invited to leave for age-appropriate activities part-way through morning service. Please use a face covering indoors, unless exempt. Visit and subscribe to our YouTube channel for live worship and to listen again at home: [www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness](http://www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness).

### CALL TO WORSHIP (FROM ISAIAH 35:8a,9b,10)

**And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness;  
it will be for those who walk on that Way.**

**But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return.**

**They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.**

**Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.**

### COME, O LONG EXPECTED JESUS

**Come, O long-expected Jesus,  
born to set your people free!  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Christ, in whom our rest shall be.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,  
born salvation to impart;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.**

**Born your people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a King;  
born to reign in us for ever,  
now your gracious kingdom bring.**

**By your own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by your all-sufficient merit  
raise us to your glorious throne.**

*Charles Wesley. Praise Trust version © 2000. CCL  
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### PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Today we pray for sister churches in **POOLEWE & AULTBEA** (minister, Rev Dan Paterson) and at **GREENOCK** in Inverclyde.

### BAPTISM OF ESTHER MARY GILLESPIE

#### PSALM 84:1-3,10-11 (CM)

**How lovely is thy dwelling-place,  
O LORD of hosts, to me!  
The tabernacles of thy grace  
how pleasant, LORD, they be!**

**My thirsty soul longs veh'mently,  
yea faints, thy courts to see:  
My very heart and flesh cry out,  
O living God, for thee.**

**Behold, the sparrow findeth out  
an house wherein to rest;  
The swallow also for herself  
hath purchased a nest;**

**Ev'n thine own altars, where she safe  
her young ones forth may bring,  
O thou almighty LORD of hosts,  
who art my God and King.**

*The Scottish Psalter (1650). CCL License 616262. CCL Streaming 324811.*

**For in thy courts one day excels  
a thousand; rather in  
My God's house will I keep a door,  
than dwell in tents of sin.**

**For God the LORD's a sun and shield:  
he'll grace and glory give;  
And will withhold no good from them  
that uprightly do live.**

### BIBLE READING: LUKE 1:5-25

<sup>5</sup> In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. <sup>6</sup> Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. <sup>7</sup> But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

<sup>8</sup> Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, <sup>9</sup> he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup> And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside.

<sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him: 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. <sup>14</sup> He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. <sup>16</sup> He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he will go on before the

Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah asked the angel, 'How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well on in years.'

<sup>19</sup> The angel said to him, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. <sup>20</sup> And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.'

<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. <sup>22</sup> When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realised he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

<sup>23</sup> When his time of service was completed, he returned home. <sup>24</sup> After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. <sup>25</sup> 'The Lord has done this for me,' she said. 'In these days he has shown his favour and taken away my disgrace among the people.'

### AS THE DEER

**As the deer pants for the water  
so my soul longs after you;  
you alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship you.**

**You alone are my strength, my shield;  
to you alone may my spirit yield:  
you alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship you.**

I want you more than gold or silver,  
only you can satisfy;  
you alone are the real joy-giver  
and the apple of my eye.

*Martin Nystrom, Restoration Music Ltd © 1983. CCL License 616262. CCL Streaming 324811.*

You're my Friend and you're my Brother  
even though you are a king:  
I love you more than any other,  
so much more than anything.

### LUKE'S ADVENT CALENDAR: MAKE PEOPLE READY – LUKE 1:5-25

During Advent 2021 most of our Bible teaching comes from Luke, a medical doctor with the eye of a historian, who wrote the Gospel of Luke. The passage makes us ready to meet God in three ways. 1). **NOTICE THE LITTLE PEOPLE.** Luke had first-hand testimony from people caught up in the history of Jesus, including Zachariah and Elizabeth, two “little people” who became parents to John the Baptist in their old age. They had probably given up on having a child when the Angel Gabriel spoke to Zechariah in the temple. God notices and remembers the little people. 2). **PREPARE FOR THE LORD'S ARRIVAL.** God sent John to prepare the world for the coming Messiah. John would prepare the way by teaching repentance and restoration by returning our hearts to God. 3). **BELIEVE THE LORD'S WORDS.** The angel scolded Zechariah for hesitating to believe God's promise. Faith depends on whatever God has said he will do, however “too good” it sounds. Our cynical and mistrustful culture badly needs Dr Luke's Christmas good news.

### GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

'Great is thy faithfulness',  
O God my Father,  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions they  
fail not;  
as thou hast been, thou for ever wilt be.

*'Great is thy faithfulness!  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
morning by morning  
new mercies I see;  
all I have needed  
thy hand hath provided -  
'Great is thy faithfulness',  
Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter,  
and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars  
in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness,  
mercy and love.

Pardon for sin  
and a peace that endureth,  
thy own dear presence  
to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today  
and bright hope for tomorrow,  
blessings all mine,  
with ten thousand beside!

*Words Thomas O Chisholm (1866-1960). © 1923;  
Renewal, 1951. Hope Publishing Company.*

### BENEDICTION

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**SUNDAY AT SIX – live in-person and on our YOUTUBE CHANNEL at 6 PM.**

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### DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

Tea and coffee are served in the hall after both our Sunday services. Congratulations to the Gillespie family who make baptism promises this morning for Esther. They have provided cake for the congregation to share at coffee-time. On Sunday mornings there is a **creche** and **Sunday School** in the hall, and a **Youth Fellowship** meets in the evening. Over the winter we will not reopen

the main doors onto Bank Street after services to minimise loss of heat. Please use the exits on either side of the pulpit, which lead to the church hall (for refreshments) and to the Church Lane exit.

**Pop-Up Christmas Bookstall:** Visit the Resource Table for copies of ***A Better Than Anything Christmas*** advent family devotional (£4); and for ***The Dawn of Redeeming Grace***, a new Advent Devotional for adults by Sinclair Ferguson (£6). In the Church Hall you will find a selection of **Christmas cards** and a more extensive **Christmas bookstall** to browse for bibles and books for your own use or as Christmas gifts. There is a **Drop in Café and Bookstall** in the Hall this Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December from 1 to 3 pm.

**Monday:** The final **Guys Group** for the year is at 7 pm on 6<sup>th</sup> December at Stewart Vant's home, 5 Porterfield Bank. Read pages 107-119 of *Disciplines of a Godly Man* on the *Discipline of Devotion*.

**Tuesday:** The planned Ladies Bible Studies are postponed, as Carrie has been signed off work following a concussion. The **Kirk Session** will meet in the Fellowship Area at 7.30 pm.

**Wednesday:** The **Funeral of Anette MacLean** is at 12.30 pm. We extend our sympathy to Murdoch, Mairi and their families. **Church Night** is at 7.30 pm (in person and on YouTube).

**Thursday: Road to Recovery** meet in the fellowship area at 7.30 pm. Details from Martin MacLean.

**Friday Online Prayer:** A 30-minute Prayer Time on Zoom from 9 am, using the usual log on. **Christmas Bookstall and Café** in the hall, 1-3 pm.

**Saturday - A Fun Night** with party games, food and fellowship for all ages. **5.30 to 7.30 pm.** Sandwiches, fruit and crisps will be provided. Feel free to bring along drinks for your table. To minimise any risk of transmitting Covid we will encourage groups to join a table while eating and not to mix with other tables. Hand gel will be available before party games, crafts, etc. If you prefer to bring your own picnic or have special dietary requirements please feel free to bring your own items.

The final **Monthly Home Group Bible Study** for this year is planned for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December.

Thanks to those who contributed £195 to support the denomination's **Disaster and Relief Fund**.

***The Record*** magazine was provided free of charge in 2021. We encourage folk to subscribe. Current and new subscribers are asked to contribute £24 for a 2022 subscription. You can pay with an envelope in the offering with your name and marked for "The Record" (or pay via Paypal through our website with the reference "Record").

**Coffee@Dobbies** for ladies from 10.30 am on 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December and 18<sup>th</sup> January (then on the first and third Tuesdays of each month). Please come along, buy your coffee and head to the area to the left of the till for a time of chat as we seek to support each other. Contact Jane if you need help arranging a lift (237310). The magnificent sum of £500 was raised for the **Elsie Normington Haven Appeal** by the sale of Marmalade. Jane Macleod still has some 3-fruit marmalade available at £1.50 per 1lb jar (237310). Anyone wishing to donate can leave a clearly marked envelope in the offering plate. Jane thanks everyone who gave their support by buying marmalade or supplying jam jars.

**Christmas-eve Carol Service** at 6.30 pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December.

Email [office@freenorthchurch.org](mailto:office@freenorthchurch.org) to request a weekly email update and for Zoom log-on codes.

**Supporting our work:** You can donate at our website (PayPal logo), in the offering plate, or directly to our "Free North Church" bank account (82-65-18, a/c number 40246657).