

From the Manse

Dear friends,

Over the last two months we've looked at the different ways God guides us. We reflected on *Commanding Scripture*, the *Compelling Spirit*, the *Counsel of the Saints* and this month we're going to look at *Common Sense* or more precisely, reason.

What I mean by that is this: God has given us minds with which we think and reason and come to decisions. Before we knew Christ, we were 'alienated from God and enemies of God *in our minds*' (Col 1:21). When we were reconciled with God through Christ, our sin was forgiven and our minds began to be renewed (Rom 12. 1). We can begin to think in godly ways because we have been given the 'mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16). When we allow the Spirit of God to be active in every facet of our lives, then our thinking will also be guided by the Spirit. So Paul says, 'those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires (Rom 8:5). However, none of this guarantees the rightness of our thinking or intellect. Reason, though a gift of God in creation and touched by the new creation, is not infallible.

And so we must commit ourselves to spending time in fellowship with God and God's people, and we will start to think more like God. As we 'set our minds on things above' (Col 3. 2) and commit to thinking about those things that are 'true, noble, lovely, right, pure, admirable and excellent' (Phil 4. 8), as God's written Word permeates our minds and hearts, we will treasure the things of God and think the thoughts of God. As we prayerfully ask the Lord to inspire our thinking, the Holy Spirit will lead us. Then we can have even greater confidence that our human reasoning, transformed by the Spirit to be more like what God intended it to be, will guide us in God's paths.

Reason often guides us, but I would never suggest that reason alone is adequate for spiritual discernment, but it does supply a crucial link in the chain of divine guidance.

May we then know that transforming of our minds and thinking and apply that renewed 'common sense' as we seek the guidance of God.

Your friend and Pastor
Colin
Rev Colin MacLeod

.....

Please remember the following people in your prayers –

Illnesses or Hospital

Miss Florence Williamson
Miss Olivia Ross
Mr David Lee

Housebound

Mrs Anna Cameron
Mrs Margaret Grant
Mrs Mary MacDonald
Mrs Effie MacIver
Mrs Christine MacRae

Residential Homes

Mrs Mary McCulloch – Aden House
Mrs Anna MacLeod – Ballifeary
Miss Nan MacDonald - Ballifeary
Mrs Joan Macleman – Fairfield Home
Mrs Margaret MacAulay - Highview
Mrs Joan Lamont - Highview
Mrs Dolly Campbell – Isobel Fraser Home
Mr Alasdair and Mrs Barbara Morrison, Isobel Fraser Home
Mrs Ishbel Graham - Kingsmills Home

CONDOLENCES

There were two deaths in the congregation during the month of September. Betty Macrae died in Ballifeary House Care Home, on 13th September, aged 88 years. The funeral service was on Wednesday 20th September at 10am in the Free North, and interment at Badenscallie Cemetery, Achiltibuie, thereafter.

Archie McArthur died at home on 22 September, aged 90 years. The funeral service was on Saturday 30th September at 10am in the Free North and interment was in Tomnahurich Cemetery.

Please also remember Norma Nicholson whose sister, Chrissie Macleod, died in Glasgow aged 96 years. The interment was in Skye on Saturday 7th October.

We commend all those who have lost loved ones to the Lord's grace and mercy
Colin

Congratulations

To Chris Davidson, our church planter, who get engaged to Katherine Sced last week. We wish them every blessing as they make their plans for marriage together.

Colin

DEACONS' COURT NEWS

FREE NORTH CHURCH **INCOME & EXPENDITURE for January to August 2017**

GENERAL FUND

INC	£	69,976.00
EXP	£	94,665.00
BALANCE	-£	24,689.00

FABRIC FUND

INC	£	1,100.00
EXP		
BALANCE	£	1,100.00

MADRAS STREET MISSION

FUND

INC	£	9,072.00
EXP	£	4,537.00
BALANCE	£	4,535.00

ROAD TO RECOVERY FUND

INC	£	22,118.00
EXP	£	31,000.00
BALANCE	-£	8,882.00

DEVELOPMENT FUND

INC	£	38,713.00
EXP		
BALANCE	£	38,713.00

These are Fund Balances not Bank Balances

GIFT AID

Those who pay Tax on their salaries or pensions are able to claim Gift Aid up to the amount of Tax they pay. This benefits the funds of the Free North Church at no cost to the giver as the Church can reclaim the Tax. Anyone who wishes to start claiming Gift Aid, can get a form from either Angus or Susan Fraser or Ed Cameron-Mackintosh (Gift Aid Treasurer)

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

The visiting Minister at our Communion in November is Rev John Marker, Thurso Free Church. If anyone would like to join the church by professing faith for the first time or transferring from another congregation please speak to Colin, John or one of the elders.

Colin

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Congregational Fellowships

The programme for Congregational Fellowships is as follows.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| October 29 th | Harvest Thanksgiving Lunch and Praise after morning service |
| November 12 th | Communion preacher (John Marker, Thurso) |
| December 24 th | Carol service at 6.30pm |

Should anyone wish to be involved in a team that takes responsibility for the food on an evening then please do speak to Jessie.

Home Groups

Dates for the Home Groups looking at Fruitfulness on the Frontline are

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| <u>2017</u> | <u>2018</u> |
| 20 September | 17 January |
| 25 October | 21 February |
| 15 November | 14 March |
| 13 December | 18 April |
| | 16 May |

Dates for the Diary

October

Sunday 1 st	Colin taking all 3 services
Tuesday 3 rd	Congregational lunch and devotional in the hall at 12.30pm in hall (note change of date). All welcome. Guys Gearing for Growth in Manse at 7.30pm
Wednesday 4 th	Prayer round tables at 7.30pm in the hall
Thursday 5 th	Office bearers' prayer meeting at 8am in Manse
Saturday 7 th	Leprosy Mission Scotland annual Coffee morning in hall at 10am
Sunday 8 th	Colin taking FN services and Donnie taking MS service Isobel Fraser service at 3pm
Sunday 15 th	Colin taking FN services and Darren Graham taking MS service Cameron House service at 3pm
Sunday 22 nd	Sandy taking FN services and Chris Macleod taking MS service (Colin in Kilmallie)
Wednesday 25 th	Home Groups (FOFL) at 7.30pm
Thursday 26 th	Kidzone recommences for Primary age kids from 6-7pm in the hall and every Thursday thereafter
Friday 27 th	Blythswood Annual inter-church quiz in Kingsview church at 7.30pm
Saturday 28 th	Likely Dads in hall from 10.30am to 12 noon and every 2 nd and 4 th Saturday thereafter
Sunday 29 th	Colin taking FN services and Martin Maclean taking MS service Harvest Thanksgiving, Fellowship and Praise after morning service

November

Wednesday 1 st	Prayer round tables in the hall at 7.30pm
Thursday 2 nd	Office Bearers' Prayer meeting at 8am in the Manse
Sunday 5 th	Colin taking services in the FN and Darren in MS
Friday 10 th	Testimony night in the hall at 7.30pm
Saturday 11 th	Communion prep service in the hall at 7.30pm taken by John Marker, Thurso Free Church
Sunday 12 th	John Marker taking services in FN and Donnie Macleod in MS Isobel Fraser service at 3pm

November (cont'd)

Wednesday 15th Home Groups at 7.30pm
Sunday 19th Colin taking FN services
Cameron House service at 3pm
Sunday 26th Colin taking FN services

Harvest Thanksgiving Lunch

Our annual Harvest Thanksgiving Lunch will be held on Sunday 29th October when we will have a meal of "Stovies". There will be an opportunity to contribute the Free Church Disaster Fund. Everyone is invited and it would be helpful if you signed up so we have an idea of numbers.

Sandy Finlay

Guys Gearing for Growth

Working our way through John's Gospel is the focus of this men's group which meets in the manse on the first Tuesday of every month. The aim of our meeting is to foster friendships and encourage each other in discipleship making as we live out our lives in different settings and contexts week by week, relating to people who don't know Jesus.

Colin

Blythswood Boxes

Thanks to all who have already contributed items for the boxes and to those who have wrapped boxes ready to fill. We still need hats, gloves, socks and underwear for teens and adults as well as toiletries and stationery items - the complete list is on the notice board in the hall. Please put all donations in the box under the kitchen table. We plan to meet from 2pm on Thursday 26 October to cover more boxes and sort out the donated items and on Tuesday 31 October at 7pm to fill the boxes. Please come along and help - you really are needed!

Jane MacLeod

MADRAS STREET NEWS

Madras Street Hall

As from the **13th November**, all services operating from or in Madras Street Hall and House will cease for a time during which plans and preparations will be made for the launch of a church plant in Merkinch. Personal contact has been made and letters given to all users explaining the situation.

Colin

Changes at Road to Recovery

As you know, the Free North is entering into a partnership with 20 Schemes to develop our work at the Merkinch. This means that Chris Davidson, the new church planter, and his team will be moving into 39 Madras Street.

Consequently, there will be changes to the way we support those who benefit from the work of Road to Recovery. We have enlisted the help of six qualified volunteers who are willing to share in the work. While we will no longer have the significant salary and employment costs which the work entailed, we will continue to incur the usual day-to-day office expenses. We thank all who regularly supported the work of Road to Recovery until now. It is greatly appreciated. We wouldn't have been able to provide the service without the financial support of so many friends.

We commend the ongoing work to you for your prayers and practical support.

Norman Campbell/Anne Muirden

Free North Partnership with 20 Schemes

The following is an update from Chris Davidson, our church planter - Hello, over the past two weeks I have been down in Edinburgh at 20 Schemes. During this time I was involved in one-to-one training with Mez McConnell. At 20 Schemes I had an opportunity to visit several other church plants in housing schemes through Scotland. This was very informative and helpful for the future work in the Merkinch.

Please pray:

- For me, as I endeavor to make contacts with people in the Merkinch and as I prayerfully seek the path forward.
- Pray for the Partnership with 20 Schemes, that our collaboration with them would be enriching for the Free Church and 20 Schemes.
- That the Lord would gather a group, who have a passion for reaching out into the Merkinch area with the Gospel.

Thank the Lord for:

- Contacts made this week with people who potentially willing to help with the work in the Merkinch.
- Colin and the Leadership, who are a source of support.
- My engagement to Katherine.

Challenges to pray for the Months ahead:

- Engaging the community in the Merkinch area with Jesus Christ. Please pray that we can present Jesus, clearly, thoughtfully and powerfully to the community in the Merkinch.

Chris Davidson

OTHER NEWS

Blythswood Inverness Support Group

- **Harvest Supper** – Thank you to all who supported this event on Friday, 15 September in the Kingsview Christian Centre. Around 90 people from churches throughout the city enjoyed the buffet meal and an excellent presentation entitled ‘The Black Isle bounce – macro to infinity and beyond’ by Rev Sandy Sutherland of Fortrose Free Church. The sum of £1,500 was raised and this will go towards our project for this year – necessary upgrading work to accommodation at the Daniel Centre, near Cluj-Napoca in Romania. This has offered a home to almost 100 abandoned young men who have spent their lives in state care. This project helps fill many of the social, emotional and educational gaps in their lives.
- **Annual Quiz Night – Friday, 27 October at 7.30** in the Kingsview Christian Centre. There will be around 12 teams of four from churches in and around Inverness. Our Minister is to be the quizmaster and we will have a team at the quiz, so please come along and support both our team and Blythswood. As part of the audience, you can, if you wish, take part by completing the quiz sheets which will be available. Donations will be invited on the night, and again this will go towards the building work at the Daniel Centre in Romania. Following the quiz, tea and home baking will be provided.

Archie Fraser/Cathel Innes/Murina Anderson

Visit to Malawi with Scottish Bible Society

Greetings from Malawi the warm heart of Africa.

From 22nd September - 2nd October five of us representing the Scottish Bible Society travelled to Malawi to meet people who are being helped by the Bible Society of Malawi. We met many fine Christian people working on the ground and thanks to the generosity of people in this congregation and others in Scotland we were able to purchase 206 children's bibles for distribution.

Christians in Malawi are proud of the connection with Scotland going all the way back to David Livingston. Around 80% of the people are subsistence farmers who are not able to afford to buy a bible. The Bible Society has a programme where families who would benefit from a bible are given one and encouraged to read it every day. We met a number of families who shared how after their evening meal, with the help of a torch (it gets dark around 6.00pm) they would read the bible together. Most houses do not have running water or electricity.

The Bible Society also provide bibles for children and we saw Sunday Schools where they operate a library system so the bibles can be shared amongst the hundreds of children who attend. We heard children retelling bible stories and sharing memory verses and were very impressed by their knowledge of the bible.

It was wonderful to see God at work in that country and it gave us a longing to see him work in our country in a similar way.

Sandy Finlay

HELPFUL THOUGHTS

“Life can seem like there is no career path. It may seem like ‘crazy paving’ and you must lay it all yourself!”

“But we are reminded to cast our worries on The Lord in prayer, restful in the knowledge that He carries our burdens for us.”

“We may shake on the Rock, but Christ The Rock never shakes under us.”

“We need Him - remember, the best of ships in the best of waters pick up barnacles!”

“Grudges are highly communicable - beware! A bad attitude is like a flat tyre. Until you change it, you are going nowhere.”

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

“We cannot have a victory without a battle, character without conflict, perfect love without suffering.”