

DALMENY & QUEENSFERRY PARISH CHURCHES

MIDWEEK SERVICES

DECEMBER 2022

The first three Thursdays of December will follow the Advent theme **“Peace on Earth.”** These services will be on Zoom at 9.30am. Please email office@qpcweb.org to ask for the Zoom link, if you would like to join us and are not already on the circulation list.

On **Thursday 22nd December**, we will meet in person at Queensferry Parish Church at 9.30am for informal worship with a few readings and carols, followed by coffee and mince pies.

Week 1 – Seeing God in others

Leader:

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to you
from heaven’s all-gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Opening Responses

The herald comes to bring good news and announce prosperity saying:

THE LORD OUR GOD IS KING!

The watchmen on the city wall lift up their voices in jubilation, saying:

THE LORD OUR GOD IS RETURNING TO ZION!

How lovely on the mountain are the feet of the herald who brings good news of salvation and restoration.

FROM ONE END OF THE WORLD TO THE OTHER ALL NATIONS WILL SEE THE DELIVERANCE OF OUR GOD!

You might want to listen to an **Advent hymn** or other piece of music suitable for Advent.

Read: Psalm 122

Prayer

Loving God, in this season of excitement and weariness open our hearts to your presence, for we know you meet us and hold us:

In and beyond the busyness, in and beyond the fear that we won't accomplish all we have to do, in and beyond the rush we always promise ourselves won't happen this year.

When we are tired and frayed, when we lose sight of what it's all about, when we put ourselves first and we forget that you come to bring love and peace; come close to us we pray.

King of Kings, we stand before you, the judge of all the earth. You know all our thoughts and our attitudes, our

actions and our reactions. We can hide nothing from your searching gaze.

We confess that we have been careless in word and deed.

LORD, FORGIVE AND RESTORE US

We confess that we have failed to see you in the poor and needy.

LORD, FORGIVE AND RESTORE US.

We confess that we have selfishly pursued our own ends rather than seeking your will.

LORD, FORGIVE AND RESTORE US.

God over all,
Christ within us,
Spirit around us,
hear our prayer and send your messenger of peace to us
and to the sleeping world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ in whose words
we pray further together, saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: Isaiah 2 verses 1 - 5

Matthew 25 verses 31 - 40

Reflection – a few thoughts/ideas

Encourage everyone to think about all the people you
and they met last week – neighbours, family, friends,
shopkeepers, the postman the proud or difficult
the joyful, the humble, the caring. Think about the
words you spoke. Were they sensitively chosen or

hastily blurted out? Think about the love you offered. Was it freely given or perhaps grudgingly? How could you recognise Christ in all these people? How does your faith help you to see his presence in others? How can you share the message of God's love and peace?

This part of the service might involve music or something visual; it might involve silence.

Prayer

This a time for prayers for the world; for peace in the troubled areas of the world; for those affected by AIDS (this is World AIDS Day); for the communities in which we live and the challenges faced by so many people; for the Church in our land and our own congregations here in Dalmeny and Queensferry; for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING RESPONSES

As we turn from our worship to our service in the world

**MAY WE LOVE YOU MORE DEEPLY, WORSHIP YOU
MORE JOYFULLY, FOLLOW YOU MORE CLOSELY AND
SERVE YOU MORE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, UNTIL ONE DAY
WE SEE YOU FACE TO FACE, JESUS OUR COMING KING.**

Let us bless the Lord

THANKS BE TO GOD

AMEN.

Week 2 – The Word of the Lord endureth forever

Leader:

The Word of the Lord is living and active. Sharper even than a sword with two edges, it cuts through our defences and our masks, exposing our inmost thoughts and attitudes, laying them bare before God's all-seeing eye.

Opening Responses

In the beginning was the Word – spoken and breathed, a promise made and kept.

SPEAK IT LOUD AND CLEAR – GOD'S PROMISE IS TRUE!

The Word was in the beginning, and through him all things come into being.

**ETERNAL AND NEAR AT HAND, ALREADY AND NOT YET,
GOD'S PROMISE IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL LIFE.**

Do not hold back!

**SPEAK OUT, GIVING VOICE TO GOD'S PEACE WHICH
PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING.**

Perhaps read or listen to an **Advent hymn** here – maybe relating to Scripture/God's word, or listen to a piece of music suitable for Advent.

Read: Psalm 119 verses 129 - 136

Prayer

In the spirit of Advent we watch for the signs of that which is to come. We look for them wherever we are.

COME, GRACIOUS JESUS, COME.

Loving God, we know that we are not always good at watching for your Word. We sometimes confuse our word with yours or bow to ideas which seem to our advantage or which others create to threaten us with your judgment.

Be patient with our failures, O God.

BE PRESENT IN OUR WATCHING, JESUS

We confess to you that often we would rather not wait for your Word, O God. Sometimes we long for instant solutions to issues which arise in our lives and we refuse to read your word or pray or pause to listen for your truth. Sometimes we are so impatient that we create you in our image rather than honouring you as Lord and Saviour.

Be patient with our failures, O God.

BE PRESENT IN OUR WATCHING, JESUS

Hope can be so hard to hold, Lord God, and we become discouraged and turn away from steady faithfulness instead of holding to your promises.

Be patient with our failures, O God.

BE PRESENT IN OUR WATCHING, JESUS

In this Advent season we wait and hope for the coming of Christ. In silence let us remember and look for small signs of hope which have been given to us:

SILENCE

And now hear us as we pray in your Son's words, saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: Isaiah 45 verses 22 – 25

Luke 4 verses 14 - 21

Reflection – a few thoughts/ideas

Consider the impact God's word has on your life. Is it there just to provide comfort and peace at moments of crisis and stress? Is it a book of peace? Do we have a few favourite passages or are we open to all of scripture? How do we react when it cuts into the comfort of our present lives and challenges us to live more for the kingdom? In this Advent season may we become more open to God's word.

This part of the service might involve music or something visual; it might involve silence

Prayer

This a time for prayers for the world; for peace on earth; for the communities in which we live; for the Church in our land and for our own congregations of Dalmeny and Queensferry; for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING PRAYER

As we turn from our worship to our service in the world

**MAY WE WHO HAVE HEARD YOUR WORD LEARN
WHAT IT TEACHES, TAKE IT INTO OUR HEARTS, AND
APPLY IT TO OUR DAILY LIVES, FOR IT IS IN OBEYING
YOUR WORD THAT WE WILL FIND PERFECT FREEDOM.
AMEN**

Week 3 – Mary says “Yes.”

Leader:

His people will live in safety because people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness, and he will bring peace. (Micah 5, part of verse 4.)

Opening responses

Lord Christ, born of Mary, in our littleness, in our weakness,

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Lord Christ, born of Mary, in our strength and achievement,

LET YOUR KINGDOM COME

Lord Christ, born of Mary, in the overturning of our values, in the renewing of your people,

LET YOUR KINGDOM COME.

Perhaps read a Christmas hymn at this point or Hymn 287 “No wind at the window.” There are recordings of it to the tune in the hymnbook but I think it goes well to “Cradle Song.”

Read: Luke 1 verses 26 - 38

Prayer

How can it be, God, that you chose Mary? She was just a village girl in an obscure part of the world which never quite made the headlines.

How can it be that you sent this poor woman an angel to terrify and confuse her with news which turned her world upside-down?

How can it be that Gabriel could say “Do not be afraid”?

How can it be that she was no longer afraid and she said “yes” to you, God?

Lord, we praise you and we seek to learn from the example of Mary.

We praise you for calling us to do your work in the world, for choosing ordinary people to do extraordinary deeds.

Often we fail to respond to your calling. Sometimes we think our excuses are good ones until we think of Mary – not knowing what lay ahead and yet willing to risk her reputation.

Help us to accept you as Mary did – wholeheartedly, and willing to accept the unexpected, prepared to trust your way rather than the ways of the world.

If you send us an angel, may we not be afraid and may we say “yes.”

And now hear us as we pray in Jesus’ words, saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: 1 John 3 verses 22 - 24

Matthew 28 verses 16 – 20

Reflection – a few thoughts/ideas

Try to put yourself in Mary's shoes. She was a very young girl living in the country and she was probably quite content for her life to continue there without a great deal of excitement. Imagine her terror at Gabriel's appearance. Imagine her fears for her reputation. How on earth could she tell Joseph about her pregnancy? Suddenly she was at the centre of God's plans. She could have made excuses.

What kind of excuses do we make for not obeying God?

This part of the service could include something visual or perhaps silence.

Prayer

This a time for prayers for the world; for the communities in which we live; for peace on earth; for the Church in our land and for our congregations in Dalmeny and Queensferry; for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING RESPONSES

In towns and villages

In small homes and large

CHRIST IS WAITING TO BE BORN

In high streets and in rural communities

In palaces and in war-torn lands

CHRIST IS WAITING TO BE BORN

In the vastness of the universe

In the intimacy of our hearts

CHRIST IS WAITING TO BE BORN

Come, Lord Jesus

COME INTO OUR HOMES

COME INTO OUR LIVES

COME – AND STAY

AMEN