

ORDER OF SERVICE - 17 DECEMBER 2023

GREYFRIARS KIRK



WELCOME
TO WORSHIP

MINISTRY TEAM

Gillian Couper
Prof Bert Kerrigan KC
Sue MacGregor



SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday 17 December 2023 – Third Sunday of Advent

You are very warmly welcomed to Sunday Services at Greyfriars. All our services are available on our YouTube channel for viewing at any time at bit.ly/greyfriarstv.

Organ: A la venue de Noel

Claude Balbastre

Welcome and Call to Worship: Gillian Couper

Hymn 489:

Down Ampney

1. *Come down, O Love Divine, seek out this soul of mine,
and visit it with your own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.*
2. *O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;
and let your glorious light shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.*
3. *Let holy charity my outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart, which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.*
4. *And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
we cannot guess its grace, till we become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.*

Bianco da Siena, *tr.* Richard Littledale

The Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

Leader 1: God our Father, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Saviour who would bring peace. You helped them to spread the joyful message of his coming kingdom.

Leader 2: Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to shine with the light that you brought into the world, to share with those around us the good news of your power and love.

(The Third Candle is Lit)

Leader 1: We close our advent candle prayer together, saying:

All: *Lord Jesus, light of the world, give peace in our hearts this coming Christmas and show all the world God's love.* *Amen*

Call to Prayer

Prayers of Approach, Confession and Pardon

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy.)

Collect for the Day: *God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes he may find us waiting, in awe and wonder for him, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.* *Amen*

Hymn 305: *Cranham*

1. *In the bleak mid-winter frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak mid-winter long ago.*
2. *Our God, heaven cannot hold Him nor earth sustain,
heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign:
in the bleak mid-winter a stable-place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.*
3. *Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
a breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay;
enough for him, whom angels fall down before, the ox and ass and camel which adore.*
4. *Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim throngèd the air;
but only his mother, in her maiden bliss, worshipped the Belovèd with a kiss.*
5. *What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part, yet what I can I give Him, give my heart.*

Christina Rossetti

The Word of God

Isaiah 61: 1 – 3 and 10-11

Reader: Hilary Clydesdale

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

1 Thessalonians 5: 12 – 24 and 28

But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Hymn 640:

All for Jesus

1. *Holy Spirit, come, confirm us in the truth that Christ makes known;
we have faith and understanding through your helping gifts alone.*
2. *Holy Spirit, come, console us, come as advocate to plead;
loving Spirit from the Father, grant in Christ the help we need.*
3. *Holy Spirit, come, renew us, come yourself to make us live;
keep us holy through your presence, holy through the gifts you give.*

William Brian Foley

John 1: 6 - 28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is the word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Anthem:

This is the truth sent from above, the truth of God, the God of love,
therefore don't turn me from your door, but hearken all both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate is that God did man create;
the next thing which to you I'll tell, woman was made with man to dwell.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes, till God the Lord did interpose;
and so a promise soon did run that he would redeem us by his Son.

Traditional

arr. R. Vaughan Williams

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith:

*We believe in God, who is love, whose love is manifest in all Creation,
in our lives, and in all people.*

*We follow Christ, who embodied God's love. In his life and ministry,
his death and resurrection, and his granting to us of his Spirit,
he filled us with that love as well.*

*We live by the Spirit, the presence of God's love in us. In that love we participate
in the Church, Body of Christ, in loving God by loving our neighbours
through our prayers, our presence, our gifts and our service.*

*Love is our faith, and it is a gift from God. We thank God,
and ask God's blessings, that we may love in the name of Christ
and the power of the Spirit, to God's glory.*

Amen

The Offering

Veni Emmanuel

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Pastoral Prayer

*The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.*

Amen

Hymn 477:

Helmsley

1. *Lo, he comes with clouds descending, Christ, the Lamb, for sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending join to sing the glad refrain:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! God appears on earth to reign.*
2. *Every eye shall now behold him, robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him, pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing, shall the true Messiah see.*
3. *Those deep wounds of cross and passion still his glorious body bears;
cause of endless exultation to his ransomed worshippers;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! See! the day of God appears.*
4. *Yea, amen, let all adore you, high on your eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory, claim the kingdom for your own;
oh, come quickly, oh, come quickly, oh, come quickly, Alleluia! come, Lord, come!*

Charles Wesley

Blessing

*May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place;
May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.*

Organ: Noel Suisse

Louis Claude Daquin

NOTES

Forthcoming Services

Today	12.30 pm: Gaelic Christmas Service 7.00 pm: 9 Lessons and Carols, at St Cuthbert's
Sunday 24 December	10.30 am: Morning Worship 5.00 pm: Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols
Monday 25 December	10.30 am: Christmas Day Worship
Sunday 31 December	10.30 am: Morning Worship

Refreshments

You are warmly invited to join us after the service for biscuits and tea or coffee, served at the back of the church beneath the organ. If you are new to the Kirk, visiting after some time away, or do not know anyone yet, please feel welcome to introduce yourself to the welcomers on the door and ministry team before or after the service; and if you would like to join in the friendly conversations at the tables over coffee or tea, we look forward to getting to know you.

Giving with Gift Aid or by card

When giving to the Kirk with a cash offering during the service, do please use the Gift Aid envelope that you will find in the backs of the chairs. If you are a UK taxpayer we can reclaim a further 25p in the £ by way of tax refund, without cost to yourself. If you have already completed an envelope in full on a previous occasion, or completed a Gift Aid declaration, you need only fill in your name and the amount.

If you would prefer to make your offering by card, rather than cash, there is now a card reader at the kitchen hatch at the back of the church, which links to the Kirk's bank account. Thank you so much for your support, which we depend on to maintain the life of the Kirk.

Concerts and Events at Greyfriars

Check out <https://greyfriarskirk.com/events/> for information on all our upcoming events and concerts. The regular lunchtime concerts on Thursdays will resume in the New Year.

Concerts and Events elsewhere

Augustine United Church – <https://www.augustine.org.uk/about-us/diary/>

St Columba's by the Castle – <https://www.stcolumbasbythecastle.org.uk/>

St Cuthbert's – <https://stcuthberts-edinburgh.uk/>

Grassmarket Community Project – <https://grassmarket.org/whats-on/>

Greyfriars Charteris Centre – <https://www.charteriscentre.com/>

Guerilla Peace

The University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy and their Associate Chaplain Dr Urzula Glienecke have set up a web site <https://guerillapeaceukraine.org> to answer the call to "Light up our hearts for Ukraine"; they invite you to visit it to share the solidarity, vigilance, and hope, wherever you are in the world at any time and from anywhere.

(over)

Greyfriars & St Cuthbert's Update

At the working group meeting on 5 December, the focus was on output from the Kirk Session away day in November. The first part of that away day was a "getting to know" each other and it was reassuring to understand we have similarities in many aspects of what we do and how we do it. Moving forward, we will produce a monthly newsletter which will share things that have been achieved to date, what we are working on, and where we are on the journey toward union. The first edition will be shared in January, with the Order of Service, and also available online. Please do take one, or ask for a copy if you would like to take one for others who either can't come to a service or tend not to access things online.

Meantime, a suggestions box has been placed on the congregation table under the organ for your feedback, suggestions and concerns. Please do put your name on the back of the slip so that we can respond directly back to you. And of course, Gillian and Jo warmly welcome anyone to get in touch if they would like to chat. Either leave a message with the Kirk at 0131 229 1900 for one of them to call you back, or email Jo at sessionclerk@greyfriarskirk.com, or Gillian at parishassociate@greyfriarskirk.com, or join us for coffee after a service.

We look forward to Christmas and to our joint service of **9 Lessons and Carols** this evening at **7.00 pm** at St Cuthbert's. Come along to support the choir and enjoy the fellowship over mince pies and mulled wine afterwards. We will be planning more joint services and events in 2024, so do attend a service at St Cuthbert's sometime to get to know the folk there.

News from the Ministry Team, and Pastoral Care

Recently, we have welcomed Prof. Bert Kerrigan KC to join the Greyfriars ministry team, alongside Gillian Couper, Parish Associate and Sue MacGregor, Probationer Minister.

The Rev Karen Campbell, minister at Marchmont St Giles, has been appointed as Interim Moderator of the Greyfriars Kirk Session.

Sue, Gillian and Bert are pleased to hear from anyone in the congregation or community, if you would like to get in touch for any reason. Whether you'd like to hear about how things are going at Greyfriars, seek support or pastoral care, or simply share a cup of tea and a chat, you will be very welcome. If you know of anyone who you think might appreciate some contact or help from the ministry team too, please do let them know. You can reach them through the church office, 0131 225 1900, or by email: Gillian at parishassociate@greyfriarskirk.com; Sue at probationerminister@greyfriarskirk.com; Bert at kerrigan@kerrigankc.com.