



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 26th April 2020

Service conducted by the minister, Rev Angus MacRae.

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This is a guide to our Sunday morning service on 26th April. The service is shared online on the Free North YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjxeX18IKP4grKdqWEt2dgw>

WELCOME, CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER OF INVOCATION (from Psalm 25)

To you, O Lord, we lift up our hearts.

To you we offer our praise and prayer, our worship and thanksgiving, even our very lives.

Make your ways known to us. Show us the path on which we should walk.

*Lead us in your truth and teach us. For you alone are the God who saves, The God in whom we trust;
And the One on whom we wait. Amen.*

PSALM 71:14-17 (Scottish Psalter version)

But I with expectation
will hope continually;
And yet with praises more and more
I will thee magnify.

Thy justice and salvation
my mouth abroad shall show,
Ev'n all the day; for I thereof
the numbers do not know.

And I will constantly go on
in strength of God the Lord;
And thine own righteousness, ev'n thine
alone, I will record.

For even from my youth, O God,
by thee I have been taught;
And hitherto I have declared
the wonders thou hast wrought.

Tune: Stracathro (CM). The Glasgow Psalm Singers.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CHILDREN'S SONG: CLAP YOUR HANDS

*Clap your hands, shout for joy!
The Lord is good, the Lord is good!
Praise His name, sing out loud,
The Lord is good to me.*

Our God made heaven and earth.
Our God made you and me.
Our God loves and cares for you –

you and me (wo-oh-wo-oh).
Clap your hands...

Jesus came and lived on earth,
Jesus lived and died for me.
Jesus takes away my sin
and sets me free (wo-oh-wo-oh).
Clap your hands...

BIBLE READING (ALISTAIR GILLESPIE): JOHN 1:19-28 (ESV)

19 And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 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." 24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) 25 They asked him, "Then why are you baptising, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptise with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." 28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptising.

SONG OF THE MONTH: "CHRIST OUR HOPE IN LIFE & DEATH."

See official video by Matt Papa at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oibli1rz7mw>

What is our hope in life and death?
Christ alone, Christ alone.
What is our only confidence?
That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand?
What comes, apart from His command?
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ, in which we stand.

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death.*

What truth can calm the troubled soul?
God is good, God is good.
Where is His grace and goodness known?
In our great Redeemer's blood.

Who holds our faith when fears arise?
Who stands above the stormy trial?

Who sends the waves that bring us night
Unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal.
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death.*

Unto the grave, what will we sing?
"Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"
And what reward will heaven bring?
Everlasting life with Him.

There we will rise to meet the Lord.
Then sin and death will be destroyed.
And we will feast in endless joy
When Christ is ours forevermore.

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal.
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death.*

Sung by Ann MacRae. Words & Music Keith Getty, Matt Papa. CCL License 616262. CCL Streaming 324811.

SERMON – JOHN 1:19-28: WHEN THE WORLD ENDS, WHO DO YOU WANT TO BE?

After a powerful 18 verse introduction, the Apostle John gives centre-stage in his Gospel narrative to ‘the other John’, John the Baptist.

1). THE ‘OTHER JOHN’ REMINDS US OUR TIME IS SHORT.

God had not spoken through any prophet for 400 years. Then suddenly a unique but seemingly eccentric figure appeared, gathering huge crowds. Perhaps no revival preacher in history attracted greater crowds? John took the people back to the River Jordan, retracing their steps to the place where their ancestors began as a nation. Now, after centuries of spiritual decay and unbelief, John the Baptist offered them a symbolic rebirth and return to God through water baptism. Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest figure in Old Testament history (see Matthew 11). Why? Because John ushered in the end-times of history by preparing our world for the arrival of God in the flesh. After John the Baptist, there really was only one more prophet to be sent from God, and his name was Jesus. Because the arrival of Messiah was imminent, time to prepare was short. John explained to the Jerusalem-based leaders, the priests, Levites and Pharisees that he himself was not the Messiah, just a “voice” in the wilderness, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3, as he prepared the way for the Lord. For us too, time is short. Are we using our time to be ready to meet our God?

2). THE ‘OTHER JOHN’ POINTS US TO THE REAL CHRIST.

At the end of the world the Jews expected some significant figures to turn up, especially the Messiah (Christ), Elijah (as they read Malachi 4:5-6) and The Prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-22. But who was John? He denied being any of these three end-time figures. John was not the literal Elijah returned from heaven, but he was the figure promised in Malachi 4. The Angel of the Lord predicted his birth saying John would resemble Elijah, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Like Elijah, John was a reforming prophet of repentance, smashing Israel’s idols. John was emphatic, he was NOT the Messiah or The Prophet. That honour belonged to the one who came after John, Jesus, God’s Lamb, the true Messiah and the last prophet. We respectfully believe that Islam is mistaken to look for a final prophet coming after Jesus Christ. We would all do well to echo the attitude of John the Baptist towards Jesus, his glorious successor: *“He must become greater; I must become less.”* (John 3:30).

You are not able to save yourself, or anyone else! It is good for Christian ministers to remember they are not a Messiah. But what an honour to be a “voice”, proclaiming Jesus. Our Lord gives us his permission and encouragement to be his witnesses, pointing others to him! John could only baptise with water, symbols of new life. But the real Messiah, Jesus, went to the cross to ensure he could offer us eternal life and new life in the Holy Spirit. We are still living in the last days. When this world finally ends, who do you want to be? Someone foolishly pointing to themselves, or living as a humble disciple of Jesus like John the Baptist, pointing others to the true Messiah?

HYMN: BEHOLD OUR GOD

Who has held the oceans in His hands?
Who has numbered every grain of sand?
Kings and nations tremble at His voice
All creation rises to rejoice.

*Behold our God,
seated on His throne
Come, let us adore Him
Behold our King,*

*nothing can compare
Come, let us adore Him!*

Who has given counsel to the Lord?
Who can question any of His words?
Who can teach the One who knows all things?
Who can fathom all His wondrous deeds?
Behold our God...

Who has felt the nails upon His hands
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man?
God eternal, humbled to the grave
Jesus, Saviour, risen now to reign!
Behold our God...

You will reign forever...!

Behold our God...

*Sung by Chris Macleod. Music & Words by Jonathan Baird, Meghan Baird, Ryan Baird, & Stephen Altrogge.
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BENEDICTION

HERE TO HELP EACH OTHER

Many have relatives, neighbours and friends to assist during this time of lockdown. But the church is a family in Jesus Christ. We are here to help and encourage each other. If you need help of any sort, we would love to hear from you. Contact the minister (07 506 006 459; angusmacrae1967@gmail.com), any elder or deacon, or the church office (office@freenorthchurch.org) if we can help with a spiritual or practical need.

DIARY THIS WEEK

There is an informal evening fellowship on Zoom and YouTube tonight at 7 pm.

Praying around the Church: This week we pray for our sister churches in Shawbost, Brora and Oban.

The Kirk Session meets briefly on Zoom on Tuesday at 7:30 pm. We are looking to develop our pastoral care team and specifically hope to appoint a women's pastoral worker.

This Wednesday 29th April we hold our **Church AGM** online at 7:30 pm via Zoom or the telephone. Due to the nature of the meeting this AGM will not be streamed live on YouTube. The Meeting ID is: 253 249 2745. The regular password or phone numbers can be obtained from Martin (office@freenorthchurch.org). You can also request regular email updates from the Free North Church by contacting Martin.

We plan to offer **Christianity Explored** online over 7 weeks on Monday nights from 25th May to 6th July. The Course introduces Jesus through Mark's Gospel. Each session will last just over an hour starting at 8 pm. Please consider taking part and inviting your friends. Contact sandy Finlay for details (rfinlay@toucansurf.com, 01463 241765).

Giving to support the work of the church. You can donate through our website (see the PayPal logo at the foot of the page). To set up a standing order, post a cheque or to arrange for Gift Aid, please contact our congregational treasurer, Mrs Barbara Macphail, 31 Towerhill Avenue, Inverness, IV2 5FX.
Tel: 01463 794622. Email: bmacphail@mail.com