



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 14th June 2020

Service conducted by the minister, Rev Angus MacRae.

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This is a guide to our Sunday morning service. The service is streamed online at 11 am on the Free North YouTube channel (and is then available afterwards for catch-up or to watch again):
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjxeX18IKP4grKdqWEt2dgw>

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 124)

*If the Lord had not been on our side —the flood would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us, the raging waters would have swept us away.
Praise be to the Lord. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Amen.*

PSALM 121:1-8 (Scottish Psalter version)

I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
from whence doth come mine aid.
My safety cometh from the LORD,
who heav'n and earth hath made.

Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will
he slumber that thee keeps.
Behold, he that keeps Israel,
he slumbers not, nor sleeps.

The LORD thee keeps, the LORD thy shade
on thy right hand doth stay:
The moon by night thee shall not smite,
nor yet the sun by day.

The LORD shall keep thy soul; he shall
preserve thee from all ill.
Henceforth thy going out and in
GOD keep for ever will.

Tune: French (CM).

Sung by the Kilmallie Free Church singers.

PRAYER, TALK TO CHILDREN & LORD'S PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Invitation Service / Sunday School Prizegiving – Sunday 28th June, 11 am

Please invite friends and family to our online morning service on Sunday 28th.

Guys Group – reading Joe Barnard's book: *The Way Forward*

Explore Daily Bible Reading Notes (July-September)

Please request a copy of Joe's book or the *Explore* Notes from the minister or you can order directly from thegoodbook.co.uk or any Christian book seller.

HYMN: CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne,
while heaven's eternal anthem drowns

all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
of Him who died to be

your Saviour and your matchless King
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life,
triumphant from the grave -
who rose victorious from the strife
for those he came to save:

His glories now we sing
who died and rose on high;
who died, eternal life to bring
and lives, that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love!
Who shows his hands and side,
those wounds yet visible above
in beauty glorified!

No angel in the sky
Can fully bear the sight
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright!
Crown him the Lord of peace!

His Kingdom is at hand,
From pole to pole, let warfare cease
And Christ rule every land!
A city stands on high,
His glory it displays,
And there the nations "Holy" cry
In joyful hymns of praise.

Crown Him the Lord of Years
The Potentate of Time;
Creator of the rolling spheres
In majesty sublime!
All hail, Redeemer, hail,
for you have died for me -
Your praise shall never, never fail
through all eternity!

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BIBLE READING: JOHN 3:9-21 (NLT) - read by Edward Cameron-Mackintosh

9 "How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked. 10 Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? 11 I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. 12 But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. 16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. 18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

SERMON – JOHN 3:9-21 – BORN A HATER

There is a rumpus just now about toppling the statues of "hate" figures from the past. But hatred is dangerous, and Jesus challenges our natural tendency to hate others or to look down on them.

1) DOWN WITH THE HATERS: We may be tempted to hate Edward Colston, the 17th century slaver from Bristol, or the First Duke of Sutherland, who got rich during the Highland Clearances. Hating the Duke's henchman, Patrick Sellar, or toppling poor old Baden-Powell into Poole Harbour may help some to vent some anger. But it will not change the world or advance the desperate plight of modern slaves. The problem with angry hatred is two-fold. **1). Where do you stop?** Every life you examine could be criticised. Good people

like Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King Jr., were also ordinary flawed people who made some mistakes.

2). Have you forgotten yourself? There is no philosophy more grounded in reality than the Bible's view of humanity. Sin ruins every human heart, yours and mine. Let him who is without sin topple the first statue.

2) DOWN WITH MY PRIDE: Nicodemus, "THE teacher of Israel", was ignorant of the gospel, and simply did not understand his Bible. Jesus humbled him and showed him his need of repentance and a new start. His good reputation was not enough. In Revelation 3, Jesus spoke terrible words to the Church in ancient Sardis: "You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead." Nothing worse could be said about any person, or any church! We are proud and full of hate if we despise God's Light. We should be full of love for God and for others, but Question 5 in the Heidelberg Catechism warns us that far from such love we are all "inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour". That truth shatters our misplaced pride.

3) UP WITH THE SON OF MAN: Verses 14 and 15 direct Nicodemus to a story about Moses in Numbers 21. The grumbling Israelites were tormented and punished by fiery snakes. God's solution to His own judgment was to offer a way to be healed: "*Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.*" Jesus likened that bronze snake to himself. He would be lifted up for our salvation on the cross. All who look to Him will live. Sometimes it is right to march for justice or to topple statues. Sometimes it is right to be angry at the sins of others. But today and every day is a good day to be very humble about our own sins, our own weakness and our inability to save ourselves. Today, LOOK UP to Jesus on the cross, and LIVE.

PRAYER OF RESPONSE

God our Redeemer, Remove all pride, hatred and unbelief from our hearts. Help us to look in faith to Jesus, lifted up on the Cross to be our Saviour. Through Him You have delivered us from darkness; You have brought us into the Kingdom of your beloved Son. As His death You recalled us from death to life, so now, by his constant life within us, May He raise us up to everlasting life and joy. We pray all this through Jesus your Son, our Lord, Who is alive and ever reigns with You, in the unity of our One Glorious God; The Father, The Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

HYMN: AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.
Amazing grace! How sweet the sound.

Sung by Chris Macleod. John Newton (1725-1807). CCL License No. 616262. CCL Streaming License No. 324811.

BENEDICTION

DIARY THIS WEEK

Sunday: There is an informal evening fellowship on Zoom and YouTube tonight at 7 pm. This will include Bible Teaching from Colossians 2 & 3, *Loving Discipline for A Child's Heart & Every Heart*. We will also meet our newly appointed Women's Pastoral Worker, Carrie Marlow. She will be interviewed about her background, her faith and experience of God at work. 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 a regular weekly email update from the Free North Church from Martin.

Monday: **Christianity Explored** session 4 of 7 is at 8 pm (online using the usual Zoom details for our Sunday and Wednesday Church Nights). Sandy Finlay leads the course introducing Jesus through Mark's Gospel (rfinlay@toucansurf.com, 01463 241765).

Tuesday: The Deacons' Court meets online at 7.30 pm. We continue to plan for the coming months and value your prayers as we consider future options. We may use a questionnaire to establish how best to meet the needs of those shielding and to understand the concerns people may have about resuming public services when it is deemed safe to do so. Depending on advice from the Scottish Government and church authorities we can expect a very gradual return to normal patterns of church life, phased over several months.

Wednesday: We meet in small groups around the city to complete our monthly Bible Study on the Book of Daniel. A central group meets on Zoom at 7.30 pm (same log on as for Sundays). Those in other home groups will receive details from each group leader. We gain a lot from having fellowship in small groups, and so plan to hold Bible Studies on 15th July and on the third Wednesday of each month.

Generation Prayer: Pray for our sister churches in Trotternish (a vacant congregation in Skye) & Pairc (Lewis, where Rev Iain MacRitchie is the minister).

Next Sunday the minister is taking a break. Our guest speaker on Sunday morning will be Geoff Murray, who has completed 2 years of study at ETS. Geoff will share his testimony in the evening.

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Mission Partners: Pray for **Patrick Jok**, who serves God in South Sudan. A June update is available from **Emma de Paula**, a UCCF Staff Worker in Edinburgh. Emma prays for a good response to *CU Hope* events, and for wisdom to resource student ministry in the coming year. She is thankful to all who pray for her. To cover her costs Emma is looking to raise an additional £10,000 in support. Send her an email at edepaula@uccf.org.uk. Donate to her support at: www.uccf.org.uk/give/emma-de-paula.

In Phase 1 of exit from strict lockdown pastoral visits may take place outdoors, at a physical distance, in places such as gardens, the street or a public park. For the present all places of worship remain closed. Public worship services will probably resume in phases 3 and 4 but no details have been published or agreed as yet.

WFM Projects: Thanks for supporting the Women's Fellowship Virtual Coffee Morning. If you wish to support the WFM Annual project please send a donation for that purpose to our Treasurer.

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.

Giving to support the Free North: Donate through our website (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: treasurer@freenorthchurch.org. We welcome donations to our *Development Fund* specifically to fund the post of Carrie Marlow our new **Women's Pastoral Worker**.