



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 28th June 2020

Today's Service is conducted by our minister

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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 (John 6:35-37)

To the hungry and thirsty for God, Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life.

*Whoever comes to me will never go hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.

*All those the Father gives me will come to me,
and whoever comes to me I will never drive away." Amen.*

PSALM 40: 1-4 (Scottish Psalter)

I waited for the Lord my God,
and patiently did bear;
At length to me he did incline
my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit,
and from the miry clay,
And on a rock he set my feet,
establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth,

our God to magnify:
Many shall see it, and shall fear,
and on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose trust
upon the Lord relies;
Respecting not the proud, nor such
as turn aside to lies.

*Tune: Ballerma (CM). Recorded at a Scottish Youth
Conference (courtesy of The Psalms Sung project).*

PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

READING (Martha MacIver): JOHN 3:16-18

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

MESSAGE TO OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM SANDY FINLAY

CHILDREN'S SONG: JESUS STRONG AND KIND

Jesus said that if I thirst,
I should come to Him.
No one else can satisfy,
I should come to Him.

Jesus said if I am weak,
I should come to Him.
No one else can be my strength,
I should come to Him.

*For the Lord is good and faithful.
He will keep us day and night.
We can always run to Jesus.
Jesus, strong and kind.*

Jesus said that if I fear,
I should come to Him
No one else can be my shield.
I should come to him.
For the Lord ...

Jesus said if I am lost,
He will come to me.
And He showed me on that cross.
He will come to me.
For the Lord...

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SERMON – JOHN 3:16 – GOD'S LOVE BEATS SELF-LOVE

What do you love most? Parents, a sister, or your pets? Chocolate or chips? We love different things and different people in many forms. The Christian faith has a lot to teach about love but the “wisdom” of this world gets love wrong. Our culture assumes we are basically good and lovable people, so we expect to be liked and affirmed. A popular TV series on Netflix promotes itself with the tagline: “*Self-love Conquers All*”. That way of thinking is flawed and is ultimately anti-God. John 3:16-18 speaks of God’s astonishing and generous love against the background of our self-obsessed and unsatisfying ways of living. According to Jesus we are *not* basically good and loving. We don’t thrive when we are “accepted” for whom we are but do thrive when challenged by a loving God to be changed into new people. Self-love is idolatry that leads to death, but the famous words of John 3:16 point us to the life-giving love of God. Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, who thought he was good and thought he loved God. He was wrong and was actually part of this dying world. This gospel uses the term “world” not so much to refer to the *wideness* of God’s love (reaching the whole world) but refers to the *badness* of the world. God loved this *worldly-world* so much he gave his Son to die the cross. God has no pleasure in being a judge who condemns the world, though he will must do so, unless we find his forgiveness. Answer this question: “What do you need to do specially to be condemned by God?” This passage says *you need do nothing*, because you are already a sinner, and are already condemned! But Jesus came into our world that was already perishing, rotting and fading away in death, in order to become our Saviour. God’s loving heart was not expressed by sending us a judge to condemn but by sending His Son to save (17). God asks you to respond to a text like John 3:16. A Christian should thank God for His love and share that love. A non-Christian should respond by BELIEVING in Jesus. In John chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 20 the language of BELIEVING is always presented in the present (continuous) tense. Believing is not a one-off moment, or a matter of saying ‘yes’ to some facts. Believing is an ongoing dependence and trust. A believer never stops relying on Jesus. There are clues in John 7 and John 19 that Nicodemus later became a believer. He certainly stood up for Jesus and helped provide him with a lavish royal burial. But we need to be sure that WE have believed in Jesus! In John 6 the Lord Jesus makes a promise to anyone with spiritual hunger and thirst for God. Come to him, believe in him, and he will welcome you. “*All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*”

PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, You are God's only Son
You are the Father's loving gift,
Sharing our weak human flesh to be our Saviour.
Lord, we thirst and only You can satisfy.*

*Since we are weak, please be our strength.
Since we are filled with many fears,
Please be our shield, our life and our peace.
Lord, you are good and faithful,
You are strong and kind.
Come to us as our Merciful Saviour,
and help us to run to You in trust and obedient faith.
For your glory, and in Your Name, hear our prayers.
Amen.*

THERE IS A REDEEMER

There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank You, O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
till the work on earth is done.*

Jesus, my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,

O for sinners slain:
Thank You...

When I stand in glory
I will see His face,
and there I'll serve my King for ever
in that holy place.
Thank You...

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Lochbroom Free Church. CCL License No. 616262.*

RECOGNITION OF OUR CHILDREN AND AWARDS

BENEDICTION

DIARY THIS WEEK

Sunday Morning – 11 am on YouTube: Welcome to our Invitation Service and Sunday School Awards. Our thanks to Sandy Finlay and the Sunday School Team for getting prizes to our young people over recent days.

Sunday Evening – 7 pm on Zoom and YouTube: *Children are a Gift from God – Psalm 127*. Mairi MacAulay will then share some testimony in the evening fellowship. Zoom details can be obtained from Martin (office@freenorthchurch.org). Please request a weekly Free North email update from Martin.

Monday: **Christianity Explored** session 6 of 7 is at 8 pm (online the usual Zoom details for our Sunday and Wednesday Church Nights). Sandy Finlay leads the course (rfinlay@toucansurf.com, 01463 241765).

Wednesday: Prayer and Bible Study on Zoom at 7.30 pm (same log on as for Sundays).

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Generation Prayer: Pray for our sister churches in Knockbain (minister Rev Farquhar Renwick) and Govan G51 church plant (minister Rev Norman Mackay). We keep Glasgow in our prayers following the distressing violence last Friday, praying for all those affected and injured and suffering the effects of trauma.

Lockdown: During Phase 2 the public can meet people from up to two other households outdoors. Some further lifting of restrictions is expected over the summer. A partial lifting of restrictions permits some greater connection and pastoral care in small groups, but our places of worship remain closed for public gatherings. We will keep the congregation informed of any plans for a safe reopening of our church building, but this may not happen for some considerable time. As we reopen, we will continue to provide opportunities for online worship and fellowship, as we understand many people will not be able to return to public events when they resume.

This year the **Keswick Convention** is online from 27-31 July. Visit vkc.keswickministries.org for a programme.

Mission Partners: We support **Suresh & Roja Vemulapilli of India Village Ministries**. They have responded to the severe effects of Covid-19 in rural India. In Andhra Pradesh infections have been scattered from urban to rural villages. The ministry has fed hundreds of malnourished and starving people, providing rice bags, grocery kits and vegetables. The ministry is also supporting stranded strangers in the name of Christ. **Emma de Paula** is a UCCF Staff Worker in Edinburgh. Please pray for provision of support for the coming year. Send her an email at edepaula@uccf.org.uk. Donate to her support at: www.uccf.org.uk/give/emma-de-paula.

At the close of the school year we pray for children and young people and give thanks for teachers who have continued to provide education during lockdown. Pray for physical and spiritual refreshment over the summer and peace in each heart as many pupils, students and teachers look to the future with anxiety.

Pray for a movement of God's Spirit in our City and nation, and for blessing on online and personal ministry and outreach. Give thanks for those who have heard and responded to the gospel during lockdown. Pray that they would grow in Christ and that God's Church will learn from and be strengthened by recent events.

Pray for the local *Road to Recovery* ministry, and the online meeting on Thursday evenings.

Guys Group: email angusmacrae1967@gmail.com if you would like a copy of Joe Barnard's book: *The Way Forward*. We hope to get a couple of discussion groups going in July.

Walking Group: Derek Morrison is keen to establish an early Saturday morning walking group when possible. If this is of interest contact Derek on: derekmary@icloud.com.

HERE TO HELP 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).

Covid-19 Ness-side Support is a community support group covering much of Inverness (Kinmylies to Culloden). Their direct number is 01463 353015. You can contact Julie Ferguson on 07 780 726 893 to find out more, to request help or to offer your support to others in the community.

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**. Our deacons and elders have agreed to kickstart funding by each donating £250.