



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 5th July 2020

Today's Service is conducted by our minister

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This is a guide to our Sunday Morning Service, streamed online at 11 am on the Free North YouTube channel and available afterwards for catch-up. We also have a live Sunday Church Night Fellowship at 7 pm. (See: www.youtube.com/channel/UCjxeX18IKP4grKdqWEt2dggw).

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (from Acts 17; Isaiah 66)

O God, you do not live in temples made by human hands.

Heaven is your throne, and the earth is your footstool.

All mankind shall come and bow before you. Grant us humble hearts as we come to you.

You call us to your worship with these words: 'These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.'

Receive our praise and grant us new life through Jesus your beloved Son, Amen.

GLORIOUS THINGS OF THEE ARE SPOKEN

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion city of our God!
He, whose word cannot be broken,
formed thee for His own abode:

On the rock of ages founded,
what can shake they sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters
and all fear of want remove:

Who can faint, while such a river
ever flows, their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver
never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hovering,
See the cloud and fire appear,
For a glory and a covering,
Showing that the Lord is near.

Thus deriving from their Banner
light by night and shade by day –
Safe, they feed upon the Manna
Which He gives them when they pray.

Saviour, if of Zion's city
I, through grace, a member am;
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.

Fading is the worldling's pleasure
all his boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasure
none but Zion's children know!

John Newton (1725-1807). Greg De Blicke & New Scottish Hymns Band. CCL License 616262. CCL Streaming License 324811.

PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

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 FC singers.

READING (Rob MacIver): JOHN 3:22-36

²² After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptised. ²³ Now John also was baptising at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptised. ²⁴ (This was before John was put in prison.) ²⁵ An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶ They came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan – the one you testified about – look, he is baptising, and everyone is going to him.'

²⁷ To this John replied, 'A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said, "I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him." ²⁹ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰ He must become greater; I must become less.'

³¹ The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³ Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴ For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

SERMON – JOHN 3:22-36 – THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB

John the Baptist knew he was not the Saviour. The church (God's bride) is pledged to be united to Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom. Thankfully John was humble enough to accept his role as "best man", supporting Jesus the bridegroom. John was the best man for that job because he was: **(1) NOT JEALOUS OF JESUS...** As the last OT prophet, he shone a spotlight on Jesus. But we humans easily become competitive and jealous of the success of others. Churches and ministries need to take care and guard against a competitive attitude. The antidote for John (and for us) is to: **(2) BE JEALOUS FOR JESUS!** John makes four statements that show his concern for Jesus to get all the glory. He accepts all this is from God (v. 27); John is not the Christ (v. 28); he is thrilled to be the Best Man (v. 29); and he must decrease, while Jesus must increase (v. 30). What will it look like for us to decrease, and for Jesus to increase? Has Lockdown been good for our eternal soul and eternal future? Perhaps we have come to a place of decision, a fork in the road. Will we believe the gospel and live our lives to lift up Jesus, or turn away? *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.*

GRACE (by CityAlight)

Your grace that leads this sinner home
From death to life forever;
And sings the song of righteousness
By blood and not by merit.

Your grace that reaches far and wide
To every tribe and nation;
Has called my heart to enter in
The joy of Your salvation.

By grace I am redeemed,
By grace I am restored:
And now I freely walk,
Into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Your grace that I cannot explain,
Not by my earthly wisdom:
The Prince of life, without a stain,
Was traded for this sinner.

By grace I am redeemed,
By grace I am restored:

And now I freely walk,
Into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Let praise rise up and overflow,
My song resound forever;
For grace will see me welcomed home,
To walk beside my Saviour.

By grace I am redeemed,
By grace I am restored:
And now I freely walk,
Into the arms of Christ my Lord.

By grace I am redeemed,
By grace I am restored:
And now I freely walk,
Into the arms of Christ my Lord.

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PRAYER

BENEDICTION & CLOSING PRAISE

(The Hope Choir, women from several congregations in Ayrshire, sing a lockdown version of Jesus Draw Me Ever Nearer).

DIARY THIS WEEK

Sunday Services – 11 am on YouTube (*The Best Man for the Job - John 3:22-36*), and 7 pm on Zoom and YouTube: *How to Rest in Parenting – Psalm 127*. Catriona MacDonald from Edinburgh will then share news from her time teaching in San Andres, a Christian school set up by the Free Church over a century ago in Lima, Peru. Zoom details can be obtained from Martin (office@freenorthchurch.org). Please request a weekly Free North email update from Martin.

Monday: **Christianity Explored** the final session 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 sister churches in Bonar Bridge/Lairg & Leith Elder Memorial (Colin MacLeod).

Lockdown: We anticipate new advice from the Scottish Government and our denomination in the coming week as we enter Phase 3 of recovery from the Public Health emergency. A local Project Group is making preparations for the safe resumption of some public gatherings in the future. Our elders will meet on 21st

July to consider their proposals for resuming public gatherings. We will continue to provide opportunities for online worship and fellowship for all those unable to return to public events whenever they resume.

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

The annual **Getty Sing Conference** (which requires a registration fee) is online this year from 30th August to 2nd September. See <https://gettymusicworshipconference.com> for more.

Mission Partners: The Free Church **Timothy Project** produces Bible Study materials for the church in a large near-eastern nation. It is hoped to support local believers writing in their own language, but the coronavirus outbreak has caused delays. Pray for wisdom to proceed and for continued enthusiasm on the part of writers and team members. **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.

The *Record* magazine is available for download at <https://freechurch.org/news/the-record-junejuly-2020>.

Free Church Books has a summer sale. The 'SUMMER20READS' discount code offers 25% off the recommended price of many titles. Details at <https://thefree.church/books20sale>.

Pray for physical and spiritual refreshment of children, young people and teachers over the summer.

Pray for a movement of God's Spirit in our City and nation. Give thanks for those who have heard the gospel and responded during lockdown. Tomorrow marks our new minister's 100th day in the Free North.

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

Bob Stewart is home from hospital. Pray for him, for Belle and all who help to care for Bob at home.

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 by the end of 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.