



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 26th July 2020

Today's Service is conducted by our minister

Rev Angus MacRae. Tel: (01349) 862183.

Mobile: 07 506 006 459. Email: angusmacrae1967@gmail.com

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. Tonight, a short service including praise will stream on YouTube at 7 pm, followed by a Zoom fellowship starting at 7.30 pm. (Subscribe to our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCjxeX18IKP4grKdqWEt2dgw).

WELCOME, ASCRIBE PRAISE TO GOD (from Psalm 18:1-2,30,46)

I love you, Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

*My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

As for God, his way is perfect:

*The Lord's word is flawless;
he shields all who take refuge in him.
The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Saviour! Amen.*

PSALM 105:1-11 (Sing Psalms version)

Give thanks to the LORD God and call on his
name;

His wonderful deeds to the nations proclaim.
Sing praises to him, and his exploits record;
Let all those who seek him rejoice in the LORD.

You chosen ones, look to the LORD and his might;
Seek ever his face, and his wonders recite,
His miracles too, and his judgments divine—
You children of Abraham, Jacob's own line.

The LORD is our God, and he rules all the earth.

Rememb'ring his cov'nant—the word he set
forth—

He vowed, for the ages to come, to make good
His promise to Abr'ham, to Isaac renewed.

To Jacob his sov'reign decree was made sure;
With Isr'el his cov'nant would always endure:
"To you I will give, as your portion to stand,
The country of Canaan, the beautiful land."

*Tune: Foundation (11.11.11.11. an old folk tune from the
American South). Words © Free Church of Scotland 2003.
Recording from Psalms for All Seasons © 2007.*

PRAYER, TALK TO CHILDREN & LORD'S PRAYER

UPDATE ON CHURCH REOPENING & SURVEY OF YOUR INTENTIONS

Please complete our online survey. This will help us organise and plan for a safe reopening of the church building from Sunday 16th August. Online worship will continue to be available, as many people will be unable to return to in-person services right away. The survey is at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/X7QNXXV>

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 Blicek & New Scottish Hymns Band. CCL License 616262. CCL Streaming License 324811.

BIBLE READING (Anna MacRae): JOHN 4:43-54

⁴³ After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honour in his own country.) ⁴⁵ When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there. ⁴⁶ Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay ill at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. ⁴⁸ 'Unless you people see signs and wonders,' Jesus told him, 'you will never believe.' ⁴⁹ The royal official said, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.' ⁵⁰ 'Go,' Jesus replied, 'your son will live.' The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹ While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵² When he enquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, 'Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.' ⁵³ Then the father realised that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, 'Your son will live.' So he and his whole household believed. ⁵⁴ This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

JAMES I PACKER – “WEAKNESS IS THE WAY” SHORT VIDEO

In his old age Jim Packer wrote about weakness. He died on 17th July in his 94th year. *“But to keep me from being puffed up with pride because of the many wonderful things I saw, I was given a painful physical ailment, which acts as Satan's messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud.” (2 Corinthians 12:7, GNB).*

SERMON – JOHN 4 – WHO NEEDS SIGNS AND WONDERS?

There are puzzles in this passage. PUZZLE 1). WHO NEEDS SIGNS & WONDERS? This text, on the face of it, seems to be dead against miracles as something that generates new faith. Jesus is critical of the Galilee folk and a desperate father, a Royal official, who turns up looking for a miracle. John selects events, mostly miracles, which were done in public and labelled as “signs”. But do we need signs and miracles today? The Samaritans had a revival without miracles. In 10:41 we learn that John the Baptist performed no miracles, but everything he said about Jesus was true! The prophets saw ‘signs’ as a marker of Messiah’s blessing (see Isaiah 35:3-6). Such SIGNS ARE GOOD AND IMPORTANT WHEN THEY ARE RECEIVED BY FAITH. BUT SIGNS LEAD TO GREATER GUILT AND JUDGEMENT IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF UNBELIEF. Without belief, an appetite for signs is a bad thing. PUZZLE 2). WHAT REALLY HONOURS JESUS? In v. 44 Jesus says prophets get honour everywhere except at their own home! The Galilee folk gave Jesus a superficial welcome. In reality they wanted God’s gifts and miracles without accepting God or Jesus as the giver of these gifts. Recall John 1:10-11, He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Jesus speaks words in v. 48 that sound very off-putting. But the desperate Royal official was not put off. He kept asking in faith for the life of his dying son. He displayed faith. In 2015 the writer and broadcaster Stephen Fry was asked about his atheism in a famous interview broadcast on RTE in Ireland. He was asked, “Suppose it’s all true, and you walk up to the pearly gates, and are confronted by God. What will Stephen Fry say to (God)...?” Stephen Fry replied: “I’d say, bone cancer in children? What’s that about? How dare you? How dare you create a world to which there is such misery that is not our fault. It’s not right, it’s utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world that is so full of injustice and pain. That’s what I would say.” The Galileans and Stephen Fry’s both wanted to enjoy a world of bliss: God’s gifts without the giver. How can we ever find that better joyful future world that the signs and miracles point to if we will not face up to our sin that has ruined this world? The total healing, the absence of pain, belongs to a future age. The hope for us is that Jesus had compassion and helped those who cried to him in faith. The miracle the official wanted was granted. The fever left his son at 1 pm (the 7th hour), the very hour when Jesus spoke the words of healing. Miracle-seekers brought no honour to Jesus but his simple faith led to the official and his whole household to believe. IS SEEING BELIEVING? In the Bible, it is the other way around. Believing leads to seeing!

PRAYER OUR SISTER CHURCHES AT BARVAS, DUMBARTON & IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

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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BENEDICTION

DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

Note a **CHANGE to arrangements for Sunday Evening services**. For the next few weeks our Morning Service will be on YouTube as usual at 11 am. However over coming weeks we will share a short series for **Summer Sunday Evenings**. These will premiere on YouTube (not Zoom) on Sundays at 7.00 pm. Tonight's message will focus on **Isaiah 63 & 64 - The Next Revival**. That short evening service will include praise items, which do not really work on Zoom. **We can then meet up for fellowship on Zoom at 7.30 pm** for questions, discussion, and prayer. The usual Zoom details can be obtained from Martin (office@freenorthchurch.org).

Today (Sunday 26th) anyone interested in meeting for a **socially distanced walk** around the river and canal basin can meet outside the Free North Church at 1 pm. Bring a picnic and check the weather forecast.

This week the **Keswick Convention** is online from 27-31 July. The BBC Radio 4 Sunday Service this morning at 8:10 am is also from the Keswick Convention. Visit vkc.keswickministries.org for a full programme.

Tuesday: Presbytery will induct Euan Dodds to Kilmallie and ordain and induct Peter Turnbull to Burghead.

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

Next Sunday: Online worship at 11 am and 7 pm. Our guest preacher at 11 am is **Rev Ben Fiddian**. A native of Cardiff, Ben is a member of Buccleuch Free Church and teaches theology at the Faith Mission College.

Generation Prayer: Pray this week for our sister churches at Barvas (Lewis, Rev Murdo Campbell); Dumbarton (supply Rev Colin Buchannan); and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (Rev Peter Aiken).

Resuming in-person Services: The Kirk Session has agreed to resume **Sunday Morning in-person services** in the church building from 11 am on Sunday 16th August. In-person worship will also be available on **Wednesdays** at 7.30 pm from the 19th. **Online worship** will be available at 11 am and 7 pm on Sundays and 7.30 pm on Wednesdays. No one should come if they are unwell or have symptoms of Covid-19. Those attending need to use hand sanitiser. Contact-tracing details will be recorded for each household. Do pray for one another as worship will not feel very normal to begin with. We will observe 2-meter social distancing and avoid singing. As we are limited to a maximum of 50 attendees, we expect a booking system will be required unless limits are relaxed by Government. It will help if you complete an **ONLINE SURVEY** available on our website, the Free North Facebook page and at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/X7QNXVV>. We will need to depend on God's grace as we adjust and go forward together in fellowship. Our priority is to maintain the worship of God and mission to our city. If you are unable to attend in person you may wish to meet with other individuals or households for fellowship or to share together in our online worship.

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: Please explore the resources on the **Generation** website including the regularly updated podcast (<https://generation-mission.org/generation-podcast>).

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).

Giving to support the Free North: Donate through our website (PayPal logo). 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.