



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP **11 am – Sunday 11th October 2020**

*Sunday services are conducted today at 11 am by our minister
Rev Angus MacRae and at 6 pm by Mr James Blackwell of ETS.*

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This is a guide to our 11 am **Sunday Morning Service**, held live in-person at the Free North Church and broadcast online the Free North YouTube channel.

Note the new earlier time of our **“Sundays at 6”** Evening Service, available only on YouTube.

Both our Sunday services are available afterwards for catch-up.

(Subscribe to our YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness).

WELCOME & UNISON CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 95:6-7)

*Come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
He is our God; we are the people of his pasture
and the sheep of his hand. Amen.*

PSALM 95:1-6 (Scottish Psalter)

O come, let us sing to the LORD:
come, let us every one
A joyful noise make to the Rock
of our salvätion.

Let us before his presence come
with praise and thankful voice;
Let us sing psalms to him with grace,
and make a joyful noise.

For GOD, a great God, and great King,
above all gods he is.
Depths of the earth are in his hand,
the strength of hills is his.

To him the spacious sea belongs,
for he the same did make;
The dry land also from his hands
its form at first did take.

O come, and let us worship him,
let us bow down withal,
And on our knees before the LORD
our Maker let us fall.

*Tune: Land of Rest (CM).
Recorded at the General Assembly Hall
St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh.*

PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

This week we pray for our sister churches in **LOHCARRON & APPECROSS**, & in **DUMFRIES**.

GREETINGS FROM ROB ILDERTON, UK TEAM LEADER OF MTW

CONFESSION OF SIN & ASSURANCE OF PEACE AND SALVATION

*Merciful God, we cast ourselves before your throne of grace.
You see in us every wrong act, unclean thought and selfish motive.
The burden of our sins is more than we can bear.*

But where our sin abounds, O God, let your grace much more abound.

May we find forgiveness in Jesus Christ our only resting place, for the sake of your glory. Amen

BIBLE READINGS: 1st PETER 1:1-3; 2:4-12; 5:12-13 (read by Carrie Marlow)

1: ¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... ^{2:4} As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[Ⓜ] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says: 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' ⁸ and, 'A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.' They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us... ^{5:12} With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. ¹³ She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

UPDATE FROM CARRIE MARLOW, OUR NEW WOMEN'S PASTORAL WORKER

SERMON – EZEKIEL 1:1-3 – EXILES IN INVERNESS.

Ezekiel 1:1-3: *In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the River Kebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. ² On the fifth of the month – it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin – ³ the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the River Kebar in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the Lord was on him.* A helpful lens through which to see ourselves is the biblical concept of an **EXILE**. We are an **EXILIC CHURCH**, although we live in Inverness, not in ancient Egypt or Babylon. The human family has been exiled from God, since Adam and Eve were forced from their home with God in Eden by their (and our!) deliberate sin and rejection of God. The bible is full of stories of nomads and exiles, who wandered or were driven far from home. These exiles included Abraham, Moses, and several generations of the people of Israel. Jesus himself was exiled as a small child, and the early church experienced scattering and exile among pagan nations soon after Pentecost. Peter's letters and the Letter to the Hebrews are full of words of gospel hope for exiles, strangers and pilgrims making their way HOME to God as they live by faith. Today we can grasp two ideas from the experience of Ezekiel, an exile in Babylon. **1). SEE GOD'S GLORY IN BABYLON.** The God of majesty has glory and weight. He is heavy! If God is light-weight for us, or other things in life seem more real or important than God, we need our eyes and hearts to refocus on the glory of God and his promises. God is there, and his glory is real, even in our 'Babylon'. **2). FEEL GOD'S HAND IN BABYLON.** Ezekiel was 30, the age he could have expected to become a priest. But instead of serving God in the security of God's temple at Jerusalem, he was called to bring a prophetic message to bewildered exiles struggling with injustice, hundreds of miles away in pagan Babylon. In exile, Ezekiel was still under God's mighty hand. God brought glory into his life and ministry to overcome the overwhelming conditions of exile by his personal touch. Today we must learn to live as dual citizens. We live in Inverness, where we love our city and its people. But we are not supposed to feel completely at home until we see God in all his glory and feel his hand upon us. For now, we seek the prosperity of our earthly home, as we share the glory of the future city of God with our families and friends. In Inverness, or in Babylon, we have glorious visions to share.

HYMN: YET NOT I BUT THROUGH CHRIST IN ME

What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer,
There is no more for heaven now to give,
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom,
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.

*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
For my life is wholly bound to his.
Oh, how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

The night is dark, but I am not forsaken,
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay;
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing,
For in my need, His power is displayed.
*To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me,
Through the deepest valley He will lead,
Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven,
The future sure, the price it has been paid.

For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon,
And He was raised to overthrow the grave.
*To this I hold, my sin has been defeated,
Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh, the chains are released, I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

With every breath I long to follow Jesus,
For He has said that He will bring me home;
And day by day I know He will renew me,
Until I stand with joy before the throne.
*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus;
All the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete, still my lips shall
repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

*When the race is complete, still my lips shall
repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

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BENEDICTION

WOMEN'S PASTORAL WORKER - CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like to get in touch with Carrie Marlow, the Women's Pastoral Worker, you can contact her by phone on 07583 498782 or email carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org. We warmly welcome Carrie to her new role. Please support this role in prayer and by passing on pastoral needs and referrals.

MANSE FAMILY

Angus, Ann and Iain MacRae thank everyone who helped and supported them during their move to Inverness. People have been incredibly kind and thoughtful. They are well settled into a lovely new home at 19 Mingary Crescent, Inverness, IV2 6FQ, and look forward to being able to open the house up for hospitality when that is possible.

PASTORAL

Mrs Marie Rhoda MacLeod of MacEwan Drive sadly died suddenly last Friday. We send our sympathy to Fiona, Gordon and all the family. Julie Ferguson has been back in hospital and would value prayer for herself and Roddie. Helen MacKenzie is recovering well. Christina MacArthur requires spinal surgery in Aberdeen. Joan MacLeod and Stewart Vant will be married on 24th October.

DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

IN-PERSON WORSHIP AT THE FREE NORTH: We offer in-person worship on Sunday mornings and on some Wednesday evenings. **Families with children are always welcome to come to church (for all or part of the service) and a Sunday School for Primary age children is available in the fellowship area.** Try to arrive in good time to be shown to your seat by the welcome team. If you need water bring your own water bottle

and any books, bibles, or children's toys and materials that you require. The Scottish Government requires the use of facemasks indoors. Worshippers may be seated with other household members or with someone in their social "bubble". We divide the congregation **by surname** into **two groups** so that as many as possible may attend. The pattern is Sunday 11th October - surnames **A to Mack**; Sunday 18th October - surnames **MaL to Z**. This guidance is flexible and intended to avoid a "booking" system. **Visitors and folk who cannot attend when it is their "turn"** (perhaps because of travel, illness or shift work) **should feel free to attend ON ANY SUNDAY THAT THEY CAN, even if it is not their "turn"**. We do not wish to exclude anyone who wishes to attend or to put pressure on anyone to return, for example if they have health concerns. Online worship services will continue to be provided for those worshipping at home. **Please DO NOT attend church if you experience any symptoms of Covid-19.**

Sunday: This morning at 11 am we welcome **Rob Ilderton**, UK Team leader of Mission to the World, a global ministry of the PCA. The evening service, at the new time of 6 pm, is on YouTube only and is led by **James Blackwell**, a second year student at ETS.

Monday: Session 4 of our Guy's Groups is this Monday at 10.00 am and 7 pm. For this session read '*Men Need Clarity*' (pp. 75-86 of Joe Barnard's book, *The Way Forward*). Copies of the book and a *Study Guide* are available at church. The guide can also be sent by email.

Wednesday: We meet in the Free North Hall and online on Zoom at 7.30 pm for Prayer and Bible Study.

Guys Groups Catch-Up Sessions: Chris MacLeod is running catch-up sessions for any who missed earlier studies of Joe Barnard's book, *The Way Forward*. **Email Martin** at office@freenorthchurch.org for details of **Chris MacLeod's Zoom meetings**. These will take place on the following dates: This Wednesday 14th – 11 am (pages 39-58); Tuesday 20th – 7 pm (pages 59-74); Monday 26th – 11 am (pages 75-86).

Log-on details for our regular Zoom meetings can be obtained from Martin (office@freenorthchurch.org).

Next Sunday Angus is taking a weekend off and expects to be in Edinburgh. Our services at 11 am and 6 pm will be taken by Rev Chris Davidson, our mission partner planting a church in the Merkinch.

New Members: We hope to welcome new members into the Free North Church family in November and December. Please contact the minister, any elder, or our women's pastoral worker if you are a new Christian believer and wish to discuss a commitment to follow Jesus and to belong to his church or if you have moved from a previous church connection and now wish to commit yourself to the Free North church family.

Copies of *Explore* daily Bible reading notes are available (for October to December). These can be picked up at church or sent to you. Suggested donation, £3.

Govan Free Church was planted seven years. Copies of their latest newsletter are available at church or here: my.flipbookpdf.net/27q7o.

Free Church Books' recommend Edward T. Welch's '*A Student's Guide to Anxiety*'. This super short, super cheap little book could provide a flash of hope to any students you know, whether they're still at home or back at university and struggling. Priced £2.54 – read more at: <https://thefree.church/books-anxiety>.

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).

Support the Free North: Donate through our website (PayPal logo), the offering box, or via our treasurer, Mrs Barbara Macphail, 31 Towerhill Avenue, IV2 5FX. (01463 794622, treasurer@freenorthchurch.org).