



Welcome to the Free North

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 am – Sunday 31st October 2021

Sunday services are at 11 am & at 6 pm, both online & in-person. Contact our minister, **Rev Angus MacRae**, on: (01463) 832616; Mobile: 07506 006459; Email: angusmacrae1967@gmail.com. You can contact **Carrie Marlow**, our **Women's Pastoral Worker**, on: carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org or 07583 498782.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Free North, particularly if you are with us for the first time or exploring the Christian faith. We would love to help you become part of the Christian family. We usually stand for our praise songs. Refreshments are served in the hall after both services. Younger children will be invited to leave for age-appropriate activities part-way through morning service. Please use a face covering indoors, unless exempt. Subscribe to our YouTube channel for live archived worship and to listen again at home: www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness.

HAPPY REFORMATION SUNDAY!

Today we give thanks for the Reformation which restored the scriptures and the simplicity of the gospel to the heart of the Christian church. 504 years ago, a German Augustinian monk named Martin Luther risked his life by publishing his discoveries about the gospel of God's grace (his 95 Thesis) on 31st October 1517. Many others found freedom through the same truths as they studied God's word, leading to a widespread reform and revival of the Church.

COP-26 CLIMATE SUMMIT

We pray for peace and good order during the Climate Conference in Glasgow, and for good outcomes that will bring glory to God and protect poor nations and future generations from the misuse of God's good creation. Meditate on these issues with the help of the song played before church today, "*This is my Father's World*".

CALL TO WORSHIP (John 6:35; 7:37)

Jesus said: "*I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.*" Amen.

HYMN: HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!
What more can he say than to you he has
said,
to all who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Since Jesus is with you, do not be afraid;
since He is your God, you need not be dismayed:
He'll strengthen you, guard you, and help you to
stand,
upheld by His righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
his grace all-sufficient shall be your supply;
the flames shall not harm you: his only design
your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

The soul that in Jesus has found its repose,
he will not, he cannot, desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavour to
shake,
he'll never, no never, no never forsake!

PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Today we pray for sister churches in **Kiltearn** (Evanton, minister, Rev Gavino Fioretti), **Esk Valley** (Midlothian, minister Rev Tom Muir), and **Hope Church Coatbridge** (minister, Rev Ivor MacDonald).

UPDATE ON MISSION TO OUR SURROUNDING PARISH

BIBLE READING: EXODUS 15:22- 16:8

^{15:22}Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they travelled in the desert without finding water. ²³When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.) ²⁴So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, 'What are we to drink?' ²⁵Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink. There the Lord issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. ²⁶He said, 'If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.' ²⁷Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water. ^{16:1} The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ²In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and

Aaron. ³The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.' ⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.' ⁶So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' ⁸Moses also said, 'You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.'

SING PSALMS 78:12-20 (878777)

He showed wonders to their fathers
while they were in Egypt's land—
Split the sea and led them through it,
waters heaped on either hand.
With the cloud he led by day;
fire by night revealed their way.

In the desert God brought water
from the rock to quench their thirst—
Waters brimming like the ocean,

streams from rocky crags that burst.
But they always would defy
and reject him, God Most High.

In the desert God they challenged:
"Can he satisfy our taste?
When he struck the rock, it opened,
down the crag the waters raced.
Now our thirst is satisfied,
can he food for us provide?"

SERMON ON EXODUS 16 – GRUMBLING IN THE CAMP

God led his people into a wilderness of testing. Israel had lessons to learn on the way to their new home. **1). LEAVE YOUR BITERNESS IN EGYPT.** Three days into their new national life, Israel came to Marah. Their water had run out and the waters of Marah were bitter and undrinkable. Instead of trusting God, their hearts turned back to Egypt. But God had to persuade them to leave the old life and their old bitterness behind. **2). LEAVE YOUR GRUMBLING IN EGYPT.** Exodus 16 tells us about the grumbling of Israel five times (in 2,7,8,9,12). Grumbling is not a small problem, because grumbling reveals three spiritual problems. We do not trust God (3); we have forgotten how he saved us (6); and our grumbles are ultimately directed against God himself, not just Moses or any other convenient person. We grumble constantly but grumbling should NOT be normal in the life of a Christian. Psalms 78 and 95 look back to this episode and warn believers not to grumble or our hearts will grow hard. **3). GO FORWARDS FEEDING ON GOD'S PROVISION.** God sent water from the rock, quail birds to give meat, and manna collected from the ground to feed Israel with the bread of heaven. God's provisions of trials, tests and amazing blessings should all produce the response of faith. Later the Lord Jesus would be driven into the wilderness and tested. But unlike Israel, he would not grumble! Our calling is to feed on Jesus Christ as our water of life, our daily manna, the bread of life. When we catch ourselves grumbling and complaining, we need to quickly repent and turn back to feed on Jesus Christ our living bread.

HYMN: COME WE THAT LOVE THE LORD

Come we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

*We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We're marching upward to Zion;
the beautiful city of God.*

His children here have found
Glory begun below;
And heavenly fruit on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.

Then let our songs abound
and every tear be dry;
We're marching through Immanuel's ground,
to fairer worlds on high.

*Words traditional by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), chorus and melody traditional by Robert Lowry (1826-99).
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BENEDICTION

SUNDAY AT SIX – live in-person and on our YOUTUBE CHANNEL at 6 PM tonight.

Hebrews 11:23-28.

The Gospel for Inverness: Dare to Believe, Dare to Suffer Disgrace.

DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER

On Sunday mornings there is a **creche** and a holiday **Sunday School** in the hall. A **Youth Fellowship** meets in the CYC building at 6 pm. **Tea and coffee are served in the hall after both our Sunday services.**

Blythswood Shoebox Appeal: Thanks to all who contributed such a wonderful assortment of items for the boxes this year and thanks too to those who came along to fill the boxes. We had a lovely time together and many hands made light work of the task. We filled a total of 48 boxes for teenagers, men and women and they will be delivered to Blythswood in the next few days. Please remember in prayer the work of Blythswood and particularly for safety for the staff who take the boxes by road to so many countries.

Tuesday: Coffee@Dobbies from 10.30 am on 2nd November. Come and join us for a time of fellowship over a cup of coffee. Buy your drink and go to the quieter area to the left of the till. If you need a lift call Jane who will try to arrange one (Jane MacLeod, 01463 237310).

Tuesday: The **Deacons' Court** will meet in the fellowship area at 7.30 pm. They care for people's practical needs and administer the resources entrusted to the church. Please pray for our chairman Rob MacIver and the Clerk Stewart Vant, and for all our deacons, associate deacons and elders.

Wednesday: Join us in-person at the church and online on YouTube for **Church Night** at 7.30 pm, conducted this week by Sandy Finlay. Please try to attend in person if you can. We also wish to support those who take part from their homes. They may join on **Zoom** immediately after the live YouTube stream stops.

Wednesday: The Kirk Session meets after the prayer meeting to care for the Merkinch Church Plant.

Thursday: Road to Recovery meets in the fellowship area at 7.30 pm. Details from Martin MacLean.

Friday Online Prayer: A 30-minute Prayer Time on the usual Zoom codes, starting at 9 am.

Next Sunday: Angus is taking a Sunday off and our services on 7th November will be led by Rev Chris Davidson from Merkinch and ministry student Alex Ferrier from Smithton.

Harvest Thanksgiving Offering: Each autumn we express our thanks to God for his goodness by remembering those in need. If you wish to do so you may support the Free Church's Disaster and Relief Fund by leaving a marked donation in the offering on 7th or 14th November.

The next **Guys Group** meets on Monday 8th November, online at 10 am, an in person at 7 pm at the MacAulay's home, Willowglen, 31 Harris Road. We are reading Kent Hughes' "**Disciplines of a Godly Man**". Please read pages 75-87 on *friendship*. Future dates are 22nd November and 6th December.

The **Ladies' Bible Study** meets next on Tuesday 9th November at 10.30 am and at 7.45 pm to study Revelation 3:1-6. Copies of a study guide are available. Contact Carrie on carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org or 07583 498782 for information or if you need a lift. Future dates are 23rd Nov. and 7th December.

Communion: We will next share in Communion on Sunday 14th November. Speak to the minister or an elder if you wish to join the congregation as a church member (by professing your faith in Jesus or by transfer).

The next **Monthly Home Group Studies** are planned for 17th November and 15th December. Thanks to our hosts, group leaders and all who took part in the groups last week both in person and online.

Prayer: Plan to join us in praying for Scotland on the Free Kirk's **National Day of Prayer**, Wednesday 24th November. In our prayers this week, we remember those who are bereaved, unwell, and recovering from treatments. We pray for the Queen and nation and the COP-26 meetings in Glasgow. We ask God to draw ten new families to Christ and add them to the congregation. Pray as we prepare and plan for the UK wide Passion for Life Mission in 2022.

Zoom: To request log-on codes see the weekly email update or email Martin at office@freenorthchurch.org.

Supporting our work: Thank you to all who give generously to maintain and develop the work of our church. You can donate at our website (PayPal logo), in the offering plate, or directly to our "Free North Church" bank account (82-65-18, a/c number 40246657). Direct enquiries to Mrs Barbara Macphail: treasurer@freenorthchurch.org. Donations can be for our general fund, a specific project (such as the Women's Worker, or Live Stream project) or earmarked for our local Congregational Development Fund.