



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 3rd May 2020

Service conducted by the minister, Rev Angus MacRae.

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This is a guide to Sunday morning service. The service can be streamed online from 10 am on the Free North YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjxeX18IKP4grKdqWEt2dgw>

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 99:1-3a,9)

The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble!

He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake!

Great is the Lord in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations.

Let them praise your great and awesome name –

Exalt the LORD our God and worship...

For the LORD our God is holy. Amen.

HYMN: REJOICE, THE LORD IS KING!

Recorded by Emu Music (UK & Australia) at St Ebbe's, Oxford

Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore:
mortals, give thanks and sing,
and triumph evermore:
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
Rejoice! Again I say, rejoice!*

Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
the God of truth and love;
when He had purged our stains
He took his seat above:
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
Rejoice! Again I say, rejoice!*

His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and heaven.
The keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus given.
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
Rejoice! Again I say, rejoice!*

He sits at God's right hand,
till all His foes submit
and bow to His command
and fall beneath His feet:
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
Rejoice! Again I say, rejoice!*

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Jesus the Judge shall come
and take His servants up
to their eternal home:
*We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;
The trump of God shall sound, Rejoice!*

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
Rejoice! Again I say, rejoice!*

Sung by Phil Percival, Alanna Glover, Liv Chapman, Emu Music. Words: Charles Wesley (1707-88).

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<https://drive.google.com/a/emumusic.com/file/d/1ADID9Lr3dA6Sbs5KmfE-Bb-rRjGPS7eu/view?usp=sharing>

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S TALK: SANDY FINLAY – THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

SONG OF THE MONTH: PSALM 130 (Version by Emma Turl)

From the depths of shame and sorrow,
from my guilt and my despair,
LORD, I cry to you for mercy—
be attentive to my prayer.

*All my joy is in your presence,
all my hope is in your word;
more than watchmen wait for morning
waits my soul for you, O LORD!*

If our sins you still remembered,
how could anyone draw near?
But with you there is forgiveness,
so we come with reverent fear.

With the LORD is love unfailing—
let his people hope in him!
With our God is full redemption,
full atonement for our sin.

Author: Emma Turl. Praise Trust © 2000.

Sung by Ann MacRae.

Tune: Here is Love / Dim Ond Iesu (8787D).

BIBLE READINGS (EVAN & RACHEL CAMERON):

MARK 1:4-8 (NIV)

4 And so John came, baptising in the desert region, and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: 'After me will come one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

JOHN 1:29-34 (NIV)

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.' 32 Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit." 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.'

SASRA UPDATE: SCRIPTURE READER STEVEN CURLEY, COLCHESTER GARRISON (AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE / PARACHUTE REGIMENTS), ESSEX

SERMON – JOHN 1:29-34: CAUTION, LAMBS!

In John 1:19-42 we have a record of three consecutive days in ministry of John the Baptist. Last week we saw the events of DAY 1, when John denied being the Messiah, or Elijah, or the end-times Prophet. John just a 'voice', preparing the world for the arrival of the Messiah. Our text today covers DAY 2 (verses 29-34), where John gives Jesus the divine title, 'The Lamb of God'. Next week we will see that on DAY 3 (verses 35-42) several of John's disciples left him to become followers of Jesus. Our challenge is to accept John's testimony and believe in Jesus as our Lamb.

1). CAN YOU SEE GOD'S LAMB?

Spring is a good time to see new lambs in Scotland. They seem so cute and harmless. But John attracts our attention with his prophetic phrase, "Behold" or "Look", here is God's Lamb. The "voice" of Isaiah 40:9 also said "Behold", to announce the arrival of GOD on earth! In Jesus, God has come to take our sins away.

What did John mean by calling Jesus a LAMB? In the 400 years between the Two Testaments, the Jews began to use the term *Lamb* not as a symbol of the weak or of a meek victim of sacrifice, but as a lamb that triumphs and gains the victory over unjust enemies. In some ways the *Book of Revelation* develops that image of a strong victorious Lamb. Perhaps John expected a Lamb who would immediately judge all evil and free the people of Israel? But by calling Jesus the Lamb, John spoke even more truly of a humble and meek Saviour, one who took away our sins by his death and resurrection. We cannot make sense of the four Gospels unless we remember to read them "from the back", using the cross and resurrection as our lens to make sense of every other detail. Perhaps you are very concerned about Covid-19, frustrated and bothered by "Lockdown" and the worries and uncertainties of this time? But God wants you to be MOST concerned that all your spiritual needs are met in Jesus, and that your sins are taken away by the Lamb of God. Jesus is eventually a victorious Lamb, but his first purpose is to deal with the sin and brokenness of this world. In that regard Jesus most resembles the lambs provided by in Genesis 22, Exodus 12 and Isaiah 53. If God could take away COVID, or take away YOUR SINS, which would you choose?

2). CAN YOU SEE GOD'S ETERNAL SON?

John the Baptist was a few months older than Jesus. But he confesses that his younger relative was actually much older, and far superior, for Jesus is one with the eternal God. Jesus ranks as greater than John, as the eternal Son of the Father. You too can also become an adopted child, welcomed in the family of God. Believe John's testimony about Jesus and gaze in faith on the Eternal Son in all His glory!

3). CAN YOU SEE GOD'S BAPTISING SPIRIT?

John explains how Jesus brings us the Spirit in a new way. As the Spirit descend and remained on Jesus in the form of a dove, so the Spirit descended on the waters at Creation. The descent of the Spirit on Jesus recalls the language of Genesis 28. Jacob's vision saw Angels ascending and descending from Heaven. God's Spirit descended on Jesus to form a new Israel. God's people are a new Spirit-filled nation, united to Jesus and filled with His Spirit. Has Jesus dispensed his Holy Spirit to you? Have you asked him to do this?

In Isaiah 42:1-3, we have a picture of the Messiah as the Servant of God. Anointed in the Spirit of God, he brings might and justice with gentleness. *"I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice."* John would shortly fade away into the background. But John brought Glory to God by faithfully preparing the way for Jesus the Messiah. In Jesus the era of the quenched Spirit is over, and the outpoured Spirit has come. The Great question for us is do we believe this testimony? If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit who stayed with Jesus is also here to stay with you. If you believe this testimony, you have much more than John's water baptism could confer. You have God's Lamb and Spirit and cleansing you from all your sins.

HYMN: AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.
Amazing grace! How sweet the sound.

*Sung by Chris Macleod. Words Traditional by John Newton (1725-1807).
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BENEDICTION

HERE TO HELP EACH OTHER

Many have relatives, neighbours and friends to assist during this time of lockdown. But the church is a family in Jesus Christ. We are here to help and encourage 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) if we can help with a spiritual or practical need.

DIARY THIS WEEK

Sunday: There is an informal evening fellowship on Zoom and YouTube tonight at 7 pm. This will include an interview and testimony with Rev Robin Gray. The Meeting ID is: 253 249 2745. The regular password or phone numbers can be obtained from Martin (office@freenorthchurch.org). You can also request regular email updates from the Free North Church from Martin.

Monday: A family only graveside funeral for the Miss Anne Fraser, late of Castlehill Care Home, will be held at Kilvean Cemetery at 10.30 am on Monday. We extend sympathy to her sister Catherine and niece Karen.

Tuesday: The Kirk Session meets on Zoom at 7:30 pm.

Wednesday: Our Church Night fellowship is on Zoom & YouTube at 7.30 pm (same log on as for Sundays).

Friday: There will be a short service of worship and remembrance on YouTube at 12 noon on Friday 8th May, as we mark the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World war in Europe.

Praying around the Church: This week we pray for sister churches in Glenurquhart & Fort Augustus (minister Rev Sean Ankers) and at Broughty Ferry, Dundee (minister Rev Alberto de Paula).

Upcoming: We plan to offer ***Christianity Explored*** online over 7 weeks at 8 pm on **Monday nights** from 25th May to 6th July. The Course introduces Jesus through Mark's Gospel. Each session will last just over an hour. Please consider taking part and inviting your friends. Contact sandy Finlay for details (rfinlay@toucansurf.com, 01463 241765).

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: bmacphail@mail.com. We welcome donations to our *Development Fund* specifically to fund the post of ***Women's Pastoral Worker*** which we hope to create in the near future.