



# The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

## A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

Sunday services today at 11 am and at 6 pm are **ONLINE ONLY** conducted by our minister Rev Angus MacRae. Tel: (01463) 832616.

Mobile: 07 506 006 459. Email: [angusmacrae1967@gmail.com](mailto:angusmacrae1967@gmail.com)).

Carrie Marlow - Women's Pastoral Worker contacts:

[carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org](mailto:carrie.marlow@freenorthchurch.org) or 07583 498782.

We have suspended all in-person worship at the Free North Church for the whole of January and February in response to Government public health regulations. For the present all our services are ONLINE only. We will advise you of any changes as the situation develops. You will find our Morning and Evening services on our YouTube channel at 11 am and 6 pm. (Available afterwards for catchup. Subscribe to the channel at: [www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness](http://www.youtube.com/c/FreeNorthChurchInverness)).

### WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP (HABAKKUK 3:2)

*I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works.*

*In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by.*

*And in your anger, remember your mercy. Amen.*

### HYMN: FACING A TASK UNFINISHED

Facing a task unfinished,  
That drives us to our knees,  
A need that, undiminished,  
Rebukes our slothful ease,  
We, who rejoice to know You,  
Renew before Thy throne,  
The solemn pledge we owe You,  
To go and make You known.

Where other lords beside You  
Hold their unhindered sway,  
Where forces that defied You  
Defy You still today,  
With none to heed their crying  
For life, and love, and light,  
Unnumbered souls are dying,  
And pass into the night.

*We go to all the world  
With kingdom hope unfurled,  
No other name has power to save,*

*But Jesus Christ The Lord.*

We bear the torch that flaming  
Fell from the hands of those  
Who gave their lives proclaiming  
That Jesus died and rose.  
Ours is the same commission,  
The same glad message ours,  
Fired by the same ambition,  
To You we yield our powers.  
*We go to all the world...*

O Father who sustained them,  
O Spirit who inspired,  
Saviour, whose love constrained them,  
To toil with zeal untired.  
From cowardice defend us,  
From lethargy awake!  
Forth on Thine errands send us  
To labour for Thy sake.  
*We go to all the world...*

## PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

This week Free Church congregations are praying for **Grace Church Montrose, Leverburgh** in South Harris, and for us here in the **Free North**.

### BIBLE READING: JONAH 3:1-10 (READ BY CARRIE MARLOW)

<sup>1</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: <sup>2</sup> 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.' <sup>3</sup> Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. <sup>4</sup> Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.' <sup>5</sup> The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. <sup>6</sup> When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. <sup>7</sup> This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. <sup>8</sup> But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.' <sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

### PSALM 67: SCOTTISH PSALTER (1650)

Lord, bless and pity us,  
shine on us with thy face:  
That th' earth thy way, and nations all  
may know thy saving grace.

Let people praise thee, Lord;  
let people all thee praise.  
O let the nātions be glad,  
in songs their voices raise:

Thou 'lt justly people judge,  
on earth rule nations all.  
Let people praise thee, Lord; let them  
praise thee, both great and small.

The earth her fruit shall yield,  
our God shall blessing send.  
God shall us bless; men shall him fear  
unto earth's utmost end.

*Recorded at Lochbroom Free Church, Ullapool. SM version, tune Selma.  
CCL License No. 616262. CCL Streaming License No. 324811.*

### SERMON: JONAH 3 – SHOCKING JUDGMENT, SURPRISING MERCY

The book of Jonah is filled with unexpected events and surprises. By sending a Hebrew prophet to pagan Nineveh, God reminded Israel of the surprising and undeserved scale of his grace towards sinners. There are at least 4 surprises in Jonah chapter 3. **SURPRISE 1). GOD SENT JONAH (AGAIN).** He has a lot to learn about grace, and so do we. But wonderfully, God's word came to him a second time. **SURPRISE 2). GOD SENT A WARNING OF JUDGMENT.** The message was stark (conveyed by just 5 words in Hebrew): forty more days then Nineveh will fall. The time of waiting and testing suggested hope to the inhabitants of the city. God had the right to judge them, but perhaps he would relent...? **SURPRISE 3). GOD TURNED THE CITY TO REPENTANCE.** Amazingly, the citizens believed God. They moved through the three stages of real repentance. They accepted their guilt with sorrow; they cried out in faith to God for help; and they changed by turning back to God and his ways. The Shorter Catechism describes as repentance in similar terms: "*a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience*". Do you need to turn your life around, by the grace of God? No sin is too terrible. At Pentecost God accepted the repentance of many who had cruelly murdered God's own Son on the cross. He will accept you, as you turn

to him. **SURPRISE 4). GOD TURNED HIS HEART IN MERCY.** God was not being inconsistent, by relenting / repenting / changing his mind. He was acting in line with his holy and merciful character. But Jesus warned the people of his generation to take care not to miss the sign of the prophet Jonah. If we have heard about Jesus, we must repent or face a far worse judgement than Nineveh faced. Share with others the shock of judgment, and the wonderful surprise of mercy for all who turn back to God.

### **HYMN: THY MERCY, MY GOD**

Thy mercy, my God, is the theme of my song,  
The joy of my heart. and the boast of my tongue;  
Thy free grace alone, from the first to the last,  
Hath won my affections, and bound my soul fast.

Without Thy sweet mercy I could not live here;  
Sin would reduce me to utter despair;  
But, through Thy free goodness, my spirits revive,  
And He that first made me still keeps me alive.

Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart,  
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart;  
Dissolved by Thy goodness, I fall to the ground,  
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found.

Great Father of mercies, Thy goodness I own,  
And the covenant love of Thy crucified Son;  
All praise to the Spirit, Whose whisper divine  
Seals mercy, and pardon, and righteousness  
mine.

*Words: John Stocker (1776). Melody and recording by Sandra McCracken © 2001 Same Old Dress Music.  
Recorded at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN.  
Recording featuring Sandra McCracken, Joseph Bradshaw, and Paul Nelson. CCL Streaming 324811.*

### **BENEDICTION**

After morning service on YouTube why not log onto Zoom for a 15-minute informal **"coffee and chat"** catch up. A virtual Prayer Room will be available for those who would value that.  
Use the usual Zoom log-in details.

---

**SUNDAY AT SIX – on our YOUTUBE CHANNEL at 6 PM tonight.**  
*Gospel 2021 - The Gospel is: Our Treasure, Our Passion and Our Vision.*  
**Tonight Romans 10:11-15 – A PASSION TO BRING GOOD NEWS**  
**Followed by informal fellowship on Zoom from around 6.30 pm.**

---

### **DIARY, NEWS & PRAYER**

We are sorry in-person services are suspended for at least two months due to the public health regulations. Please get in touch if you need help or are aware of pastoral and practical needs in the church family. As we rely on technology to stay in touch try to maintain regular routines for worship that keep you close to the Lord and his people. Carrie has produced a helpful guide to using ZOOM, which is included in the weekly email this weekend, and is available to anyone on request.

**New Live Stream Equipment:** We are grateful to Alexander Dixon and Olivia Stephen of 3:16 Events for their time and skill installing cameras and operating equipment at the Free North, and for initial training of some members of the Audio-Visual Team. Thanks too to Martin and those who were put through training. Initial streaming tests have gone well. We hope to benefit very soon from regular live (rather than pre-recorded) services from our church building. It will take a little while for operators to become confident using this excellent new resource. Please be patient with any teething problems and pray for all involved in producing and broadcasting services, as we try to reach our City and far beyond with the gospel of grace.

**Today: Youth Alpha** is at 10 am on Sunday mornings FOR Secondary age young people. Details from Fiona Cameron ([fionamarion@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fionamarion@yahoo.co.uk)) or Martin at the church office ([office@freenorthchurch.org](mailto:office@freenorthchurch.org)).

**Services on YouTube at 11 am and 6 pm.** After morning service join us on Zoom for a 15-minute “coffee-time” catch up at around 12 noon. There is also an **informal after-church fellowship** on Zoom tonight.

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Join us online for **Prayer for the City** at 7.30 pm. Usual Zoom details.

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup>** - We meet online on Zoom on Friday at 11 am for 30 minutes of prayer and Bible reading, conducted by an office-bearer. Use the usual log on details.

**Mental Health Awareness**, a training event run by Presbytery on anxiety and suicide open to all on Zoom on **Saturday 6 February** (10 am to 1 pm). Particularly useful for all involved in pastoral care and support. Places can be booked at [bit.ly/mentalhealthILR](http://bit.ly/mentalhealthILR).

**Next Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February:** Services are online only at 11 am and 6 pm. There is an evening fellowship on Zoom with the new CEO who leads the team at the Free Church Offices.

The **Guys Group** will meet looking at *The Way Forward* by Joe Barnard (Men Need Self-Control, from pages 109- 124). On Zoom on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February at 10 am and 7 pm.

The **Ladies' Bible Study** is every second Thursday at 10:30 am and 7:45 pm. Remaining dates are: 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Feb, 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March. All welcome to join, get in touch with Carrie for the Zoom details.

Congratulations to Anna and Innes MacSween (Smithton) on the safe arrival of little Isaac Martin.

**Book of the month - *Before You open Your Bible*, by Matt Smethurst.** This month's great little book looks at how we approach the Bible so we can get the most out of our time in God's word. If you would like a copy popped through your letterbox then get in touch with Carrie.

**Prayer:** Pray for blessing on all who participate in our services today, asking God to draw people to the Lord Jesus, to revive the lukewarm by his Spirit and to penetrate hearts and minds with the word.

**Prayer for Youth / Families:** Give thanks for our children and youth and the Youth Alpha Course. Pray for parents in our Church family, for patience and wisdom in home-schooling, and in raising children who will grow as disciples with lives shaped by the gospel.

**Prayer:** Give thanks that Rev Andy Pearson has accepted a call to St Peter's, Dundee. Pray for the Pearson family as they prepare to move. Pray for the London City Presbyterian church as they begin a vacancy.

**Praying for 20 Schemes:** This is the list of church planting pastors and their locations to guide your prayers. Tommy Millar—*Maryhill, Glasgow*; Pete Stewart & Pete Bell—*Barlanark, Glasgow*; Andrew Mathieson—*Lochee, Dundee*; Andy Robertson—*Charleston, Dundee*; Chris Davidson—*Merkinch, Inverness*; Derek Laidlaw—*Gorgie, Edinburgh*; Gerald White—*Bingham, Edinburgh*; Andy Prime & Tim Rawlinson—*Gracemount, Edinburgh*; Mez McConnell, Andy Constable, & Jason Nelson—*Niddrie, Edinburgh*.

If you need help of any sort, we would love to hear from you. Contact the minister (07 506 006 459; [angusmacrae1967@gmail.com](mailto:angusmacrae1967@gmail.com)), any elder or deacon, or the church office ([office@freenorthchurch.org](mailto:office@freenorthchurch.org)).

**Support the Free North:** To donate or contribute to the Livestream Project visit our website (PayPal logo) or via our treasurer, Mrs Barbara Macphail, 31 Towerhill Avenue, IV2 5FX. (01463 794622, [treasurer@freenorthchurch.org](mailto:treasurer@freenorthchurch.org)).