

GARRABOST

FREE CHURCH



Weekly Bulletin

22nd March 2020

Website - www.garrabostfree.church

Facebook - [@Garrabostfreechurch](https://www.facebook.com/GarrabostFreeChurch)

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Email - garrabostfree@gmail.com

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The bulletin will look a bit different for the next few months or however long it takes until we can worship together in the way we are used to so will have to do church differently for a while. We should be thankful that we are able to do so.

Today we have a pastoral message from Andrew and some links to sermons and livestreams. Not everyone will be able to access the bulletin from the website or the Facebook page or listen to the online sermons so we all need to work together to enable everyone to feel part of our fellowship. Please think of how we can support one another during these uncertain times.

The prayer notes are different as well and can be used for the day of prayer today and each Monday as we meet together at the Throne of Grace where we can find mercy and grace to help in time of need.

Pastoral Letter from the Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

I fear it must seem to you all that, as Interim Moderator, I only ever write “Pastoral Letters” in times of disappointment and/or trial and testing! We have had a few of such times during our period of vacancy, but nothing compared to this current crisis, the very real threat to the health, safety and wellbeing of our people, and the loss of all Church services. None of us has ever been here before, and so there is no blueprint to follow. But we can be in no doubt that the LORD foresaw these events long before they came near us, and He in His Providence knows exactly what He is doing.

Perhaps understandably, some folk have interpreted the present crisis as the LORD’s “judgment” on a world that has consistently turned its back upon Him. If that were true, we would have to acknowledge that it is **less** than we, as a human race, deserve for our sins, but whether judgment or not, this is at the very least a time of “testing”, not least for the LORD’s people everywhere. More than 100 years ago, a Christian man wrote “Sometimes God wants us to be **tried** because we can grow strong only through **victory**.” But there are no victories without battles. All of us, given the choice, would choose a calm voyage, rather than experience the storms of life, but it was in the midst of a life-threatening storm that the power of Jesus over all the forces of nature was shown, in such a way as brought His disciples to their knees in front of Him. It is no exaggeration to say that that is **exactly** where we need to be in the midst of this crisis, not only because it is **right**, but even from a selfish point of view it is the **safest** place to be, and it is the place where victory is assuredly to be found.

At the moment we are deprived of our Church Services and the fellowship one of another, but many of our brothers and sisters across the world endure such isolation as a matter of routine, being persecuted if ever they dare to meet together or share their faith in public. But neither they, nor we, are deprived of the presence of Christ, and his readiness to hear us, and help us, when we cry to Him. In our present situation, we can not only empathise with the sufferings of our persecuted brothers and sisters, who cannot meet openly, but also perhaps the better appreciate the privileges that we had, and which we trust will eventually be restored to us. In the meantime the Free Church nationally has called for a Day of Prayer this Lord’s Day **22nd March**, and the local Presbytery has asked that **every Monday evening** from **8.00pm to 9.00pm** we each, just where we are, stop whatever we are doing, and join together in prayer for the LORD to work through all these situations. It will take focus and self-discipline for everyone to keep doing this, but it is by no means beyond us.

One day this crisis will have passed. During the course of it, some will have withered and drifted in their faith to a new indifference and unbelief. Some, we trust, will have grown stronger, more determined and fervent in their faith. We each still have the opportunity to affect which group we fall in to! But the people we should **really pity** and pray for, are those who must face this current situation **without any** faith or knowledge of Christ at all. Pray that this crisis may yet be used of the LORD to bring many such lost souls to think about eternity, and above all, about the Saviour who has promised that He will never leave us, nor forsake us. Who knows but this crisis may be a means of bringing many such souls to Him.

With Every Blessing

Andrew W.F. Coghill

andcoghill@gmail.com

Livestream services

To access any of the services live as they happen, please click on the link below which will take you to the Online Services page on the main Free Church website. There is a tab for each presbytery. <https://freechurch.org/online-services>

Garrabost Free Church Website

To access the bulletin and sermons online, just log on to www.garrabostfree.church and click on 'Notices', where you will be able to view the bulletin and prayer notes. They can also be accessed on the **GFC Facebook** page. To listen to any sermon preached in Garrabost congregation, click on the 'Listen to Sermons' link.

If you have any questions or suggestions or any other issues regarding the congregation's online activity (or anything else), please email garrabostfree@gmail.com or speak to one of the elders.

Free Church Legacy

For generations, the Free Church of Scotland has preached the good news of Jesus Christ. The gospel has been proclaimed, the truth has been taught and lives have been changed.

This heritage of preaching has lived on in the memories and testimonies of men and women who were there to hear for themselves. But now, this heritage can be heard again through legacy.freechurch.org.

With over 1000 sermons from days gone by, you can listen to the voices of the past proclaiming the gospel. This is their legacy. This is our hope.

If you have copies of any sermons issued via the old Free Church tape ministry and would like to submit them for digital distribution, please get in touch with the Legacy team - help@stcsfc.org

Pastoral Support

As a result of the current Coronavirus Pandemic, it is also not possible to provide pastoral care and support in the same way as previously. The list of elders and contact details were on an insert in the bulletin last week and if anyone has any requirements please feel free to contact any of them or indeed any one you know. We want to be as supportive as we can to everyone and it is important to know that even if you need to be in isolation that you are not alone. We also acknowledge that many will struggle financially and in other ways in the coming months so again please do not hesitate to ask for help if you require it.

Contact

It is important to have up to date and the most relevant contact details for everyone. If you are happy to receive updates by email please send your details to garrabostfree@gmail.com. Also if you know of anyone who is unable to get online but has a mobile then please ask them to phone one of the elders and provide the number and they can be updated or contacted by text if required.

Free Will Offering

Due to the fact that we are unable to meet together in the church buildings, many will be unable to pay their contribution as they normally do. Some have enquired about setting up a standing order to replace the envelopes. The best way of doing this is to email garrabostfree@gmail.com or contact one of the office bearers. There will be a unique reference for each person to identify them and it is also required for Gift Aid purposes

COVID-19 Free Church Youth Camps Update

In light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Free Church of Scotland is keeping all of its activities under regular review. Some activities and events have been cancelled for a period of time while others have been rescheduled. At present it has been decided to delay a decision concerning the programme of Free Church Youth Camps planned for summer 2020. Please be assured that careful consideration is being given to the viability of the camps and all available information and advice will be taken into consideration when a decision is made. That decision will be communicated directly to all parties concerned including campers, parents, leaders and supporters.

In the meantime, please pray for the church and for the work of the gospel especially among young people. For 60 years Free Church Youth Camps have been a great source of blessing for our denomination and its young people and we look forward to the next chapter in the history of our youth camps to bless, encourage and equip our next generation.

Please pray for **Kirsten** and **Donald** and all the leaders and children and all connected with the camps at this time of uncertainty.

PRAYER POINTS

Congregation and Community

Pray for the elderly and vulnerable at this unprecedented time.

Pray that a vaccine and cure would be found soon.

Pray for the leaders in our own country and throughout the world

- Please pray for the **elders**, **deacons** and the **interim moderator**. Pray for wisdom and discernment for them to make the correct judgements in all future decisions.
- Pray for those who have recently lost loved ones and also those who still grieve for loved ones after many years.
- Please pray for our **young people** with all the pressures that modern life brings and for those who have left our community for college or university or to work.
- Pray for **those** in our community who are unconverted.
- Pray for those connected with the congregation who are **housebound**, **hospitalised** or in **nursing homes** and those who are recovering at home after being in hospital.
- Pray for those receiving cancer treatment and any who are awaiting test results for themselves or for a loved one.
- Pray for any in our community who struggle with different forms of mental illness and pray for understanding and patience towards them.
- Please keep praying for **Rev Dominic Smart** and his family as he continues his fight against cancer. It is amazing how God is giving them the strength to cope.

Activities

ABC – Please pray for all the children, that they would remember the things they learn and that God would bless it to them and their families.

Point2Life – Pray for all who have attended so far this year

Sunday School – Please pray for the teachers, **Christine Cumming, Janis Brand and Finlay Maclellan** and all those who help them each week as well as the children and parents. Pray for them at this time when

Children's Church - Pray for Anne Mackenzie who has been managing the programme and rota and for all those who volunteer to help out.

Creche – Pray for the children who have been attending creche and we thank God for young families who come along.

Scripture Union – Pray for **Christine Cumming** and **Elizabeth Ferguson** and the children that have been meeting

Parent and Toddler Group - pray for the parents and the children.

Free Church Youth Camps

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PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

(Some of the prayer points may not quite be so relevant at present but it is still important to know about and pray for other congregations)

Back

Minister: Vacant Interim Moderator: Ewen Matheson

Back is one of the largest congregations in the Free Church of Scotland and is situated in Lewis covering a large district including the villages of Tong, Upper Coll, Coll, Vatisker, Back and Gress. Looking back over a year of vacancy, as a congregation we are thankful for the visiting preachers who have provided pulpit supply for us for Lord's Day morning and evening services.

Prayer Points

1. Please pray for our Interim Moderator Rev Ewen Matheson who has worked tirelessly, not only in engaging preachers for our Lord's Day services but also for being so willing to provide pastoral care for our congregation at times of bereavement and illness, all in addition to his work with his own congregation in Cross on Lewis.
2. Please pray for our congregation as we continue earnestly to seek the mind of the Lord as to who should be our next Pastor.

Cornerstone, Edinburgh

Minister: Neil MacMillan

Cornerstone is a new congregation in Morningside, Edinburgh. We were planted by St Columba's Free Church in 2015. We have a great spread of ages and ethnicities in the church.

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for new people coming to Cornerstone who are not Christians. Pray they will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
2. Our building refurbishment is scheduled to begin next month. Please pray for smooth progress and for all the financial support we need to be in place.