

GARRABOST

FREE CHURCH



Weekly Bulletin

29th March 2020

Website - www.garrabostfree.church

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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 this week's pastoral message from Andrew and some links to sermons and livestreams as well as details of our Zoom prayer meeting tomorrow night.. 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 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.

*In times like these, it is easy to let fear grip our hearts. Fear of sickness. Fear of lack. Fear of the unknown. But when fear and anxiety try to plague our every thought, we can remember this one important truth - God is with us. He is with us. He is for us. He loves us. And he invites us to enter into his rest. We are not alone. When the storm rages, he offers us peace and refuge in the midst of it. He promises hope and strength to those who turn to him. What is God saying in this crisis?" Among the answers must be this promise: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and I will surely help you" (Isaiah 41:10). Turn to Him today. **MAX LUCADO***

Pastoral Letter from the Interim Moderator

Dear Friends

As you will know, we recently held a congregation-wide Consultation about the future use of our buildings. These things **do matter**, but we are all, I'm sure, very conscious that "The Church" is neither about buildings, nor is it **contained within** any building, since "The Church" is the people of God. Jesus said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* (St Matthew 18:20). We have always known this in **theory**. But we live now in strange and testing times when we are compelled to live out the "two or three" rule in **practice**, indeed for many of us, (perhaps for most of us) there may not even **be** two or three people at home with us, much less two or three who are fellow believers.

What if we are alone in the house? Are we still part of the Body, The Church? We need never worry on that score. Our Lord Himself often sought out opportunity specifically to BE alone with His Father, so that He would be free, without distraction, to pray to Him and draw strength from Him. Was His Father less with Him, because Jesus was not in company with others? *"Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."* (Jeremiah 23:23,24) Some of our brothers and sisters in Christ have been housebound for months or years. In one sense now, we are ALL "housebound". But we do not cease thereby, to BE the Church of Jesus Christ, provided we continue to maintain that fellowship with the LORD Himself and, as far as we are able, by safe means, with His people.

Although everything just now is a bit strange for all of us, the Word of God says *"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."* (Ecclesiastes 3:1) If we think, for example, about the sufferings and death of Our Lord - at the time, it all seemed like a disaster to those who loved Him (St Luke 24:21). But on the road to Emmaus, and many times throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus showed His disciples that nothing is ever **for** nothing. **Nothing** is wasted. And just as His sufferings were not for nothing, neither will ours be, if we are trusting in Him. These times of trial are for a purpose and in the meantime we must each do what we can. ALL of us can pray – and perhaps many of us have more peace, and less distraction, in which to do so, than we have had in a long time. As you will know, the Presbytery has appointed **Every Monday from 8.00pm to 9.00pm** as a time to pause and to pray. It doesn't mean you have to spend **the whole hour** in Prayer, but at some point **during** that hour, **pause** what you are doing, lay it aside, take up your Bible, read a short portion, and pray for our country, for the world, for the Church, for the afflicted, the frightened, the sick and the bereaved.(see separate arrangements for Zoom prayer meeting) Also, ask the LORD to show you something that you, personally, might be able to do to help. We have been all been much frustrated by the restrictions which dictate what we **can't** do. But I think we will each become surprised and perhaps amazed by how much we still CAN....and perhaps **should**.....be doing. Remember the words of Jesus about the woman with the alabaster jar of ointment: *"She hath done what she could."* The LORD will never ask more of us than that. He will never blame us for what we **couldn't** do. But I think He might want us to rediscover just how much we CAN. Let's try and make that part of our focus for the week ahead.

In the meantime, please look after yourselves, stay safe, but above all, keep your faith in Christ and put your trust in Him.

With Every Blessing

Andrew

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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 last printed bulletin 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 are 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.

Monday Prayer meeting at 8pm

As you will know, and as Andrew reminds us in his pastoral letter, the Western Isles Presbytery has appointed each Monday at 8pm as a time of prayer. Andy Cumming has set up a Zoom meeting for tomorrow night for anyone to join. Andrew will be joining us as well. The meeting will start at 8 but will be open from 7.30 in order to get everyone set up and ready to start. If you are using your mobile or iPad/tablet, you will need to download the Zoom App beforehand. You can then either click on the link below or input the meeting ID and Password into the app.

Alternatively you can just dial in on 01314601196 and input the meeting ID and Password to join.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/482110840?pwd=eFQ4QjZUd2dqVm1ObGGrWWdHMjFiUT09>

Meeting ID: 482 110 840 Password: 023651

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

Note from Donald A Macleod - FCYC Supervisor

It is probably not a surprise but none the less it is with deep regret that we inform you that the Free Church has taken the decision to cancel this summer's FCYC camps due to coronavirus.

We have been monitoring the situation very closely, following Government advice and consulting with our partners. Over the past few days, the national and local picture has changed immensely. It is also now clear that whatever the situation is in the summer there will still be significant restrictions in place.

Please pray for FCYC as we go through the more practical aspects of cancelling the camps and for those whose livelihoods are affected by this decision.

FCYC would like to express a personal note of gratitude to all the leaders and cooks of the camps for their support and dedication to the young people of our church over the years. The work and prayers they have already put into this year's camps will not be wasted; nothing ever is in God's economy.

We would also like to thank those who had booked to go to camp. FCYC will be looking to arrange some kind of event as soon as practical, later in the year.

These are unprecedented times. We are praying for the many who are affected in different ways during this crisis, and especially the youth of our church for whom we run the camps each summer. We would encourage you to join with us in praying that God would be at work in their lives.

On a positive note, we have 60 years of camps to celebrate and coronavirus cannot change that. Watch this space for how we plan to celebrate and give thanks over the coming months.

Please pray for **Kirsten** and **Donald** as they consider the next steps to take and remember all the leaders and children and all others 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 MacLennan** 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

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.

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)

Fort William & Kilmonivaig

Minister: Vacant Interim Moderator: Gordon Martin

This congregation is currently vacant and is based just off the high street in Fort William. The congregation is small and ageing but friendly with some very committed people. There is a desire to see the Lord's work prosper in the town but personnel who are able to lead such work are in short supply. The congregation is grateful to all who assist them at present.

Prayer Points:

1. Pray for guidance and wisdom as the congregation is currently without a minister. Give thanks for all those who continue to support the congregation during this vacancy.
2. Pray that God would provide resources, people and vision to reach out and connect with the community of Fort William.

Lennoxtown

Church Worker: Alick Stewart Interim Moderator: Kenny Macleod

We are a small fellowship, with a mix of couples, small families, elderly and youth. We are able to host weekly groups and a drop-in and are delighted that many from the community, who are not professing Christians come along to. We have contact with lots of families, and individuals in the community through this and we build on the contacts we already have.

Prayer Points:

1. Give thanks for the encouragements seen in recent years. Pray for the ongoing work among the community around us and pray that new connections might be made.
2. Pray that more churches might be planted across the central belt.