

30TH JANUARY 2022

# FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



[www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk)

*"Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called "the rejoicing of hope" (Hebrews 3:6)." (William Gurnall)*

## PSALM 8

How excellent in all the earth,  
Lord, our Lord, is thy name!  
Who hast thy glory far advanc'd  
above the starry frame.

When I look up unto the heav'ns,  
which thine own fingers fram'd,  
Unto the moon, and to the stars,  
which were by thee ordain'd;

Fowls of the air, fish of the sea,  
all that pass through the same.  
How excellent in all the earth,  
Lord, our Lord, is thy name!

## PRAYER

*Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank you that you know us through-and-through and that your word is able, first to find us and then to speak to us and then to transform us. We pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit this book that we read will live for us today in the grace and through the teaching of our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ and so we come to you, our eyes are upon you, our hearts are full of affection for you, our wills bowed before you and we say to you, Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.*

## LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE READING ESTHER 9: 29 - 32

29 Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

30 And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

31 to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting.

32 So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

## SERMON

Among the Old Testament Historical Books, the book of Esther stands out for having no direct mention of God. Over the centuries, that has caused problems for many people. Some have even argued that Esther does not belong in the biblical canon (the collection of books inspired by the Holy Spirit).

Despite the misgivings of some, the people of God have heard His voice in the pages of Esther and have received it as divinely inspired and "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). And while there is no direct mention of the Lord in the book of Esther, there are indications that the author is well aware of God's work in history. For instance, Mordecai speaks in Esther 4:14 of help arising for the Jews "from another place." Clearly, he means that the Lord will save the Jews even if Queen Esther does not stand for them.

Still, why does the author of Esther make only indirect references to God's work in the days of Mordecai and Esther? When we think about it, there is a sense in which God remains hidden in our own lives. Yes, we know that our Creator is always directing events and working through the ordinary circumstances of our lives (Eph. 1:11). Yet, in this post-Apostolic era, God does not usually announce His presence and actions in dramatic or direct ways.

# PRAYER

We have no living prophets today to tell us, "This is what the Lord is doing right now." Most often, we discern His work in retrospect. We look back on the seeming coincidental events that so often steer us in new directions, the chain of causes and effects that make our lives turn out one way and not another, and we see that the only explanation for why things are the way they are is the invisible hand of God.

Such coincidences—and we know that under God's sovereignty there is no such thing as a coincidence—are found throughout the book of Esther. Mordecai just "happened" to hear a plot against King Ahasuerus (Est. 2:19-23). His intervention was forgotten until, for "some reason," Ahasuerus needed to cure his insomnia and was reminded of how Mordecai had saved him. This caused the king to look with favour on the Jews, and then Haman—the enemy of the Jews—"coincidentally" showed up at the right time to be forced to praise the one he hated (6:1-11). Such events cannot be chance instances of fortune in God's universe. He was behind them all, directing things with His invisible hand of providence.

There is no such thing as chance in the sense of things that "just happen"; chance is simply a name for mathematical probabilities. Our universe is not randomly running on its own, and things never occur by coincidence. The Lord is directing all things. His invisible hand of providence steers the course of history, and we can be confident that He is in charge even when He seems far away. Let this thought give us courage and hope in this fallen world.

## PSALM 27

The Lord's my light and saving health,  
who shall make me dismayed?  
My life's strength is the Lord, of whom  
then shall I be afraid?

One thing I of the Lord desired,  
and will seek to obtain,  
That all days of my life I may  
within God's house remain

That I the beauty of the Lord  
behold may and admire,  
And that I in his holy place  
may rev'rently enquire.

Heavenly Father, we praise you that the joy before Christ was God's people who are to Him the rescued lamb laid across the Good Shepherd's shoulders, the lost coin found, the Prodigal Son embraced. We ask that You would be near to us all. Give us strength, grace, hope, patience, and encouragement we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

## BENEDICTION

**And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.**

## WORSHIP

Sunday morning worship takes place at 11.00am in the church. We have reduced social distancing to 1 metre within the church and as a result have been able to increase the number of seats that are available, though there is still an upper limit. We would love to be able to welcome you to the service, so to guarantee a seat, please book with the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, preferably by 5pm on the Friday prior to the service.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: [ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking](https://ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking) or email the Session Clerk at [SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk) and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

The Sunday Zoom service is at 6.30pm. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk at [SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk)

Please continue to take care and stay safe.

# LADIES BIBLE STUDY

With the new restrictions, the meeting will be held in the Church Hall on Wednesday 2nd February at 1.30pm for approximately an hour. Do come along to study God's Word together.

## HIGHLAND FOODBANK

Donations of non-perishable food items such as tinned meat, vegetables and fruit as well as cleaning materials, toiletries and baby items are most welcome. Unfortunately, the Foodbank cannot accept fresh food. If you'd like to donate such items there are other charities which would accept them willingly such as Food Larders. Thank you for your generosity and look forward to your continued support.

# CHURCH FLOWERS

Due to Covid restrictions it is preferred that the flowers are put into the church on the Saturday morning between 11am-11.30 while the church is being cleaned. Please remember to wear a mask while within the church.

However, access is also possible earlier or later on the Saturday, or on the Friday if more convenient but please contact Martin McLauchlan and inform him you have been in the church and when (for NHS Test and Protect records). Please also remove the flowers from the church either immediately after the morning service or within the next day or two, but once again, please tell Martin that you have been in the church and when (again for recording the visit for NHS Test and Protect). Contact Jeannette Cameron for any further information. 01463 870416

If necessary, the Church key can be collected from Isabel MacDonald, 3 Rosshill Drive Maryburgh, 01349 861767. Please return key to Isabel.

## FLOWER ROTA

### FEBRUARY

Organiser – Mrs J Cameron 01463 870416

6th Mrs K Campbell  
13th Mrs J Steele  
20th Mrs MacKinnon  
27th Mrs E Munro

### MARCH

Organiser – Mrs P Chata 863801

6th Mrs S MacKenzie  
13th Mrs P Chata  
20th Mrs C Parry  
27th Mrs I Thomson