

9TH JANUARY 2022

# FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



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

*"Let us not cease to do the utmost, that we may incessantly go forward in the way of the Lord; and let us not despair of the smallness of our accomplishments." (John Calvin)*

## HYMN

1 Come, let us to the Lord our God  
with contrite hearts return;  
our God is gracious, nor will leave  
the desolate to mourn.

2 His voice commands the tempest forth,  
and stills the stormy wave;  
and though his arm be strong to smite,  
'tis also strong to save.

3 Long has the night of sorrow reigned;  
the dawn shall bring us light;  
God shall appear, and we shall rise  
with gladness in his sight.

4 Our hearts, if God we seek to know,  
shall know him and rejoice;  
his coming like the morn shall be,  
like morning songs his voice.

5 As dew upon the tender herb,  
diffusing fragrance round;  
as showers that usher in the spring,  
and cheer the thirsty ground:

6 So shall his presence bless our souls,  
and shed a joyful light;  
that hallowed morn shall chase away  
the sorrows of the night.

## PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the way in which your word has given us understanding. We pray that we may be able to say, "There is one thing I know, once I was blind but now I see the arm of the Lord revealed in my Saviour and King and friend, the Lord Jesus." So, we look to you for ourselves and for one another and for your saving grace. We thank you for all our Saviour has done for us and we pray in His 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

### 1 THESSALONIANS 1: 1 - 10

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,  
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and  
peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus  
Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making  
mention of you in our prayers,

3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith,  
labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord  
Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only,  
but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much  
assurance, as you know what kind of men we were  
among you for your sake.

6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord,  
having received the word in much affliction, with joy  
of the Holy Spirit,

7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia  
and Achaia who believe.

8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded  
forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in  
every place. Your faith toward God has gone out,  
so that we do not need to say anything.

9 For they themselves declare concerning us what  
manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned  
to God from idols to serve the living and true God,  
10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He  
raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us  
from the wrath to come.

# SERMON

'Faith, hope, and love' appear ten times in the New Testament. Of particular interest is in our reading today from 1 Thessalonians 1:3, where Paul speaks of "your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope." Three qualities of mature Christian discipleship are singled out: work of faith, labour of love, and patience (steadfastness) of hope.

Paul is not thinking here of a work, which is faith—faith is not a work. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works" (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith is an outstretched hand, a look at a crucified Saviour. Faith is saying, 'I cannot work, for no work of mine is ever sufficient to rescue a sinner like me.'

But true faith is always accompanied by work: "Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love" (Westminster Confession of Faith 11:2). James asks, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?" (James 2:14). Without corroborating, vindicating work, any claim to faith is disingenuous; it is "dead" faith (2:26). The "work" is not the cause of justification but its consequence. Speech about faith is hot air unless Jesus-like acts of kindness and love adorn our profession. No amount of faith may be seen as justifying faith unless it is accompanied by a vital principle of obedience.

Paul elsewhere uses the word labour when he speaks of his own spiritual journey "in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure" (2 Cor. 11:27). The word speaks of difficulty, effort, and pain. Strange, then, that it should be linked with love. Surely, love is instinctive and reciprocal? Not always, and perhaps rarely. Love requires self-denial and mortification on our part. We are called to love the unlovely—those who cannot, or who will not, return love.

Hope speaks of the future, when the present seems dark and difficult. Hope suggests a sovereign hand in the affairs of providence that ensures a brighter tomorrow (perhaps not in this world, but the next).

Hope speaks of covenant promises that say "yes" (2 Cor. 1:17-19) when the present is more about "no." So patience is called for, a waiting upon God, trusting His promises no matter what the present may seem to be saying. Do you see the faith that works, the labour of love, and the patience of hope in your own heart?

## HYMN

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide  
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee  
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away  
Change and decay in all around I see  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness  
Where is death's sting?  
Where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me

## PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, we thank you that you stand among us in your risen power, and we pray now that you would draw near to us that we may have fellowship all together with you and yet marvellously, mysteriously each of us have fellowship with you as though we were the only person in the world who really mattered to you. Receive all our praise, for Jesus' sake, 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.**

## SESSION CLERK'S HOLIDAY

The Session Clerk will be on holiday from the 8th to the 24th January inclusive.

The Evening Zoom Service will recommence on Sunday 9th January at 6.30pm and will be hosted by Mrs. Elizabeth Blackburn until the Session Clerk returns.



## LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The ladies will meet in the Church Hall on Wednesday 19th January at 1.30pm. This will be reviewed after the latest Covid update on 17th January.

We will look at "Breaking Through to Spiritual Maturity" and specifically "Why be a captive when you can be free?" Do come along and try this group for yourself. You'd be most welcome. Covid 19 measures will be in place to try to keep us safe.

## HIGHLAND FOODBANK

Please remember to add a little something to your shopping list to donate to the foodbank. Long life milk and juice, tinned meats and potatoes, easy cook rice are very welcome as are toiletries, washing powder (small size) and household cleaners. Thank you for thinking about the plight of the most vulnerable in our area.

## FERINTOSH GUILD

The meeting planned for Monday 10th January In the Church hall will not now take place. This is on the instruction of the Guild National Secretary.

We will attempt to let individual members know, and will be in touch with them about any further adjustments to the programme.