



CHURCH BULLETIN

SUNDAY 1st January 2023

INTRODUCTION

We are a congregation of the [Free Church of Scotland](#). We gather for public worship on the Lord's Day at 12.00noon and at 6.00pm. We use the [ESV version of the Bible](#) in the public worship of God. We use both the [Scottish Psalter](#) and [Sing Psalms](#) versions of the Psalms for the praise items in our public worship. More details on the Congregation and our ministry are available on our website [here](#).

A NEW YEAR MESSAGE

We enter a New Year on the back of what has been one of the most turbulent years in recent times – the Ukraine was invaded by the Russians in February; Rishi Sunak became the third Prime Minister of the UK Government in the space of less than four months on 25th October. There can be little doubt that the biggest story was the passing of Queen Elisabeth II on 8th September after celebrating her Platinum Jubilee in March.

This has been accompanied with the current cost of living crisis and the associated industrial action which continue to affect transport links and our NHS. The morality crisis and moral vacuum, which seem to drive so much of what happens in the Public Square in the UK, continue to lead us away from the Word of God, with the recent passing of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill being another example of the direction of travel and the journey that our Edinburgh and Westminster Parliaments are taking us on.

There has been much sadness throughout the year with the loss of life, young and old, sometimes in tragic circumstances. Closer to home many of our friends and families have lost loved ones, casting a shadow over everything else that 2022 has brought to them. 2022 has confirmed to us once again that we never know what is round the corner and that our times are not in our own hands but in the hands of our God. We stand on the threshold of another year, and we step into the unknown.

We would not be outside of the thinking of believers in the Word of God if we were to ask, 'why does God allow such chaos to continue?' The prophet Habakkuk complained to the Lord in the chaos of his own day. He asked the Lord – "*why do you idly look at wrong, destruction and violence*" (Habakkuk 1:3). He processed his complaint and then gave us an example of how we should enter the New Year. He waited upon the Lord; he said, '*I will stand at my watch post and look to see what He will say to me*' (2:10). Then he prayed – "*in the midst of the years make your work known...in wrath remember mercy*" (3:2).

Let's following the example of Habakkuk and many other biblical writers. New Year's Day is a good time to fix one's eyes on the only One who knows what the year has in store for us. We have the recipe of waiting upon God. But let's not kid ourselves! It's not always easy to do so! The things that are designed to make us look to God more are the very things which become, not only a distraction, but a stumbling block to the exercise of faith.

The Reformers and Puritans often wished each other a blessed new year by which they meant something like this: 'I hope that everything that comes your way by the hand of Providence this year may be sanctified to you in and through Christ, so that you may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and have a firm trust in our faithful God and Father for the unknown future, believing that all things work together for good to them that love Him' (Romans 8:28).

As we enter 2023, in the words of Samuel Rutherford, praying together that 'every day we may see some new thing in Christ.' And that we remember Christ's 'love has neither brim nor bottom. In the fluctuations of our feelings, we remember that Jesus admits no change in His affections; and that our heart is not the compass Jesus sails by' but His undying love for us.

SUNDAY SERVICES

The **12.00noon service today** will be taken by the Minister. On this first day and first Lord's Day of 2023 we will consider Psalm 73:23-28. The sermon title is '*The Newfound Commitment of Faith*.'

The **6.00pm service** today will be taken by Rev. Calum M. Smith, Assistant Minister at Stornoway. The message will be from Deuteronomy 6:1-9. The sermon title is '*Being God's Community*.'

The praise will be led by our precentor and the Psalms for this Lord's Day are as follows:

	12.00 Noon Service		6.00pm Service	
1	Psalms 138:1-6	Psalter (431)	Psalms 122:1-9	Psalter (416)
2	Psalms 121:1-8	Psalter (416)	Psalms 34:8-14	Sing Psalms (40)
3	Psalms 31:1-6	Sing Psalms (36)	Psalms 37:3-6	Psalter (252)
4	Psalms 86:8-11	Psalter (341)	-----	-----

English Services

The English services in the Church at 12.00noon and 6.00pm will be live streamed on our **YouTube Channel** [here](#). An audio recording of both services will be available on Sermon Audio as soon as possible after the services end. The services can be accessed on the Shawbost Free Church **Sermon Audio Page** by clicking [here](#).

Twilio Telephone Services

The availability of a sermon on the Twilio dial-up line each Lord's Day has now been discontinued. We are thankful to God for those who have been blessed through this service. We trust and pray that those who have used it up until now will get access to our services through our Sermon Audio page.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

There will be no Sunday School during the school holidays. The Sunday School will resume next Lord's Day, Sunday 8th January 2023.

PRAYER MEETING & BIBLE STUDY

The Prayer and Bible Study Meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th January 2023 at 7.00pm in the Church Hall.

MINISTER'S DIARY

The Minister's Diary for the January 2023 weeks includes the following meetings:

Date		Event	Location
Tue	10 th Jan	Board of Trustees - PMG	Zoom
Sun	15 th Jan	Holiday	
Tue	24 th Jan	Presbytery Meeting	In person
Wed	25 th Jan	Shawbost School Assembly	In person
Thu	26 th Jan	Board of Trustees	Zoom

LOCAL BEREAVEMENT

We note with sadness the passing of Janet MacPhail, 12 Arnol, on 24th December 2022. It is expected that the funeral service will take place in the Bragar Meeting Hall on Thursday 5th January 2023 with the interment to follow in the Bragar Cemetery. The date and the time will be confirmed at the beginning of the week. We remember her husband Hugh as he mourns over the loss of his wife and comes to terms with her sudden passing. We trust and pray that he and the wider family will know the comforting presence of the Lord at this time of sorrow and loss.

GOD IS GOD & YOU ARE YOU

Christian Focus have published a book written by Rev. Thomas Davis (Carloway) entitled 'God is God & You are You' with the subtitle 'Finding Confidence for Sharing our Faith.' It is a book about personal evangelism and the 'tidal wave of theology' and the 'two truths that we must never forget' which back us up in personal evangelism and sharing your faith. The published price is £9.99 per copy but it is available at the Church Door for £7.00. There are ten copies available today and more copies can be ordered through the Church on demand.

Please be encouraged to purchase a copy of this helpful book. There is a list at the door on which you can place your name and address with a note as to whether you have paid for your copy or not. If we run out of copies, please simply add your name to the same list and a copy will be available for you to pick up next Lord's Day.

ANNUAL LDOS PRAYER MEETING

The Annual LDOS/Day One Prayer Meeting will take place at the Stornoway APC, Keith Street, Stornoway, on Lord's Day 8th January at 8.30pm. All are warmly invited to attend.

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

The following are prayer points issued by the Mission Board under the Praying For One Another Scheme (PFOA) in the past week.

Monday - St Columba's Edinburgh

Pray for St C's weekend away in Jan followed by a leaders' strategy day - that they will both be a time of blessing and refreshment.

Tuesday - Richard and Barbara, a European City

Pray that we may be able to persevere in our regular visits to island homes, helping young folk with their studies and bringing God's word to the whole family. Pray also that we might be open to fresh ways of making the same message known in these homes.

Wednesday - North Tolsta

Pray for the congregation, that they will be encouraged as they grow in knowledge and likeness of Christ and faithfully serve Him.

Thursday - St Columba's Edinburgh

Week to week, pray for the preaching and the conversion of those we are regularly praying for and witnessing to.

Friday - North Tolsta

Pray that the congregation will grow in strength and unity, serving and sharing the gospel. Pray that members will be a witness to the gospel to those around them.

Saturday - St Columba's Edinburgh

Pray for the development of Winchburgh, our most recent church plant

Sunday - New Year's Day

Give thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness through 2022. Pray that in 2023 God will continue to bless the work to further His kingdom and for His glory.