



### PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd; no want shall I know.  
He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow;  
He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow.

My wandering steps he brings back to his way,  
In straight paths of righteousness making me stay;  
And this he has done his great name to display.

Though I walk in death's valley, where darkness is near,  
Because you are with me, no evil I'll fear;  
Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer.

In the sight of my en'mies a table you spread.  
The oil of rejoicing you pour on my head;  
My cup overflows and I'm graciously fed.

So surely your covenant mercy and grace  
Will follow me closely in all of my ways;  
I will dwell in the house of the LORD all my days.

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### General Information

The Free Church of Scotland currently has over 140 congregations in Scotland, as well as 5 in North America. The Church also has a full time college in the heart of Edinburgh for the training of Ministers and other Christian workers and sustains an extensive Missionary programme relative to the size of the church.

For further information, including local information, please contact the following:

Free Church of Scotland Offices

The Mound

Edinburgh EH1 2LS

Scotland

Tel: 0131 226 5286

Fax: 0131 220 0597

E-mail: [offices@freechurchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:offices@freechurchofscotland.org.uk)

Website: [www.freechurch.org](http://www.freechurch.org)

Free Church of Scotland College

The Mound

Edinburgh EH1 2LS

Scotland

Tel: 0131 226 5286

Fax: 0131 220 0597

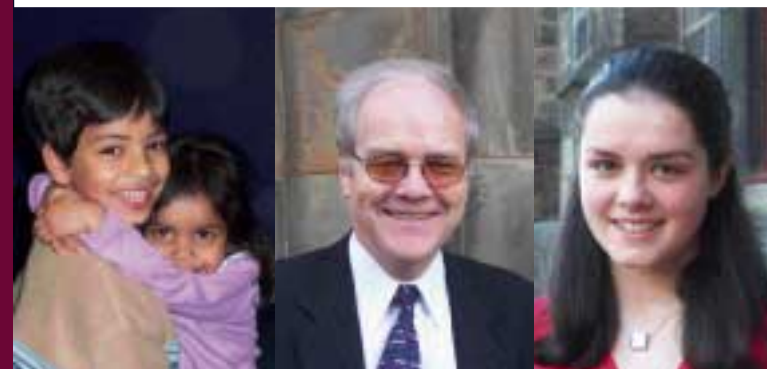
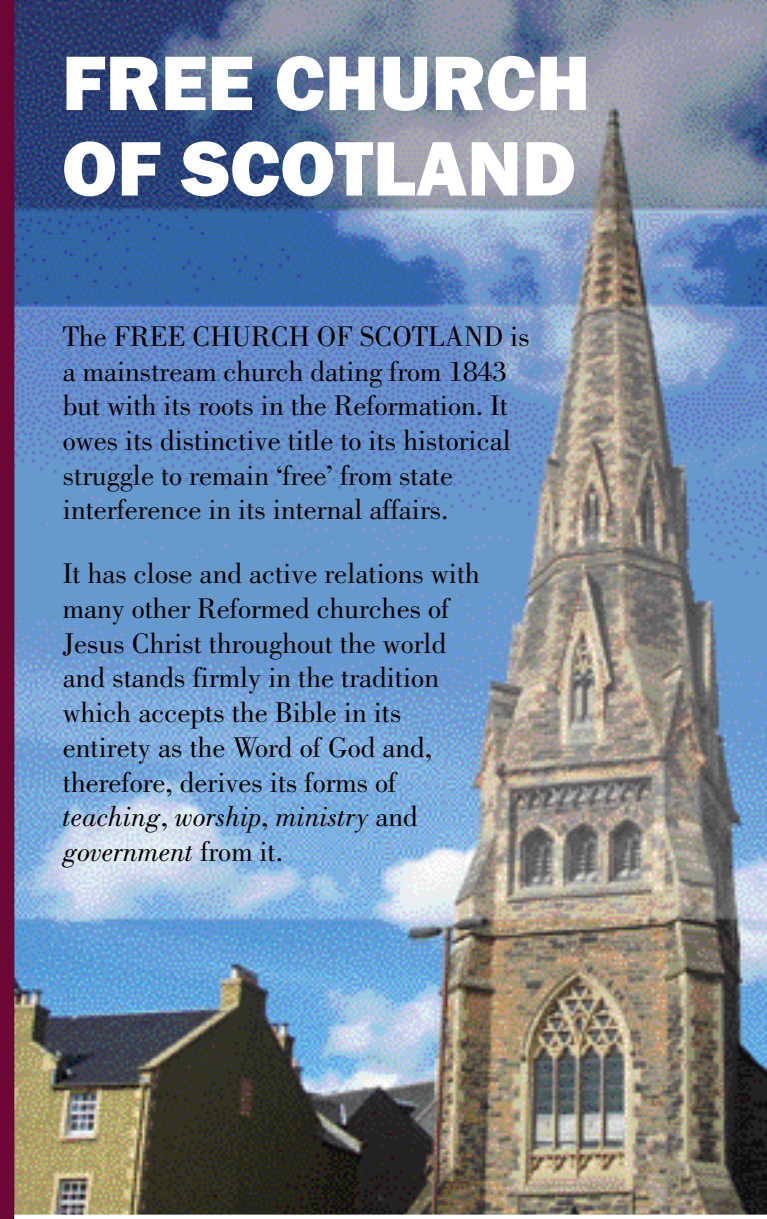
E-mail: [amacleod@freescotcoll.ac.uk](mailto:amacleod@freescotcoll.ac.uk)

Website: [www.freescotcoll.ac.uk](http://www.freescotcoll.ac.uk)

# FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND is a mainstream church dating from 1843 but with its roots in the Reformation. It owes its distinctive title to its historical struggle to remain 'free' from state interference in its internal affairs.

It has close and active relations with many other Reformed churches of Jesus Christ throughout the world and stands firmly in the tradition which accepts the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God and, therefore, derives its forms of *teaching, worship, ministry and government* from it.



## What does the Free Church Teach?

The Free Church of Scotland is committed to the following core truths:

- The only true God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- God has created the universe and sovereignly controls it.
- Humanity fell into a state of sin through disobeying God and rebelling against him with the result that we are alienated from God and liable to eternal punishment
- God provided his son, Jesus Christ (who is both fully human and fully Divine) as a Saviour
- Jesus Christ provides salvation through his life, death and resurrection, thus making a new reconciled relationship between God and humanity
- We need personal faith in Christ in order to be brought into this new relationship with God and to be saved from sin and its consequences
- The Holy Spirit is the author and sustainer of the spiritual life necessary for such a relationship with God in Christ
- The return of Christ, the resurrection of the body and the final judgement are coming events when the destiny of all shall be sealed either in heaven or in hell

All these Bible truths are affirmed in the ancient creeds of the catholic Christian Church as well as the Westminster Confession of 1643 to which the Free Church is committed.

## How does the Free Church Worship?

The worship of the church follows the New Testament model and is characterised by simplicity.

Because of the fundamental importance of God's Word, primary place is given in worship to the reading and preaching of it. The congregation responds to these first by hearing and then by offering itself to God in the other acts of worship which are prayer, the singing of inspired songs and the giving of offerings. The worship is concluded with the benediction. The Lord's Supper is held on a regular basis, although not weekly, and baptism is also administered as needed.

## How does the Free Church engage in Ministry?

As the New Testament teaches, all members of the church are called to use whatever divinely granted gift(s) they have received by serving the congregation, the wider church and the community.

This use of gifts is seen in such activities as the provision of Sunday schools and other activity groups for children; special meetings, clubs and a national programme of summer camps for young people as well as many specific local ministries to particularly vulnerable groups including drug addicts, the homeless and asylum seekers.



## How is the Free Church governed?

The government of the church also follows the New Testament model and is simply structured with only two kinds of officer: *Elders* and *Deacons*. Of these two, the higher office is that of the Elder and, because the church is ruled by Elders, it belongs to the family of churches known as 'Presbyterian'—a term derived from the Greek word for 'elder'.

### Elders

Elders are a group of rulers elected by each organised group of worshipping people (*congregation*) to oversee the spiritual welfare of the congregation. This group will include at least one ruler specially trained and set apart to teach (the *Minister*). As a formal body, they are known as the *Kirk Session* (or, simply, the *Session*). In the Presbyterian system, every Session is represented in a superior court (the *Presbytery*) which consists of a certain number of congregations within a specified geographical boundary. Each Presbytery is then represented in the highest court of the church (the *General Assembly*)

### Deacons

Deacons are individuals elected to take care of the material and financial concerns of the congregation and, as a formal body, they are referred to as the *Deacons' Court*.