



# St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



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Pentecost 11*

**D**ear Friends, as we journey on through our church year I do hope that this week's offering 'speaks' to you in your lives at this challenging and uncertain time.

Below are the readings for the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, the collect for the day, a very short reflection on the readings, prayers and a blessing.

## Readings

Isaiah 56: 1, 6 - 8; Romans 11: 1 - 2a, 29 - 32;  
Matthew 15:(10 - 20), 21 - 28.

## Collect

**O** God, you make known your almighty power in your merciful compassion: increase your mercy towards us; that we, being eager for your promises, may inherit the treasures of heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

## Reflection:

How will we remember 2020? Underlying all our answers will of course be the pandemic. I suspect that it will also be remembered particularly as a year of struggle, whether struggling to stay healthy, to pay the bills, to get fair exam results, even struggling to see how it fits with the Good News.

I think this week's Gospel reading is actually rather encouraging, because I suggest it shows Jesus struggling to understand exactly how his mission should play out. Yes, Jesus was fully divine and without sin, yet he was also fully human. After all, Luke 2:52 says that Jesus grew in wisdom. And his prayers in Gethsemane only underline his humanity and his struggle. At what point did Jesus stop growing in wisdom?

A hard passage to grasp, it is open to many interpretations. My understanding is the one that makes most sense to me - it may speak to you completely differently and that's fine.



Jesus is first of all indifferent and then apparently downright rude to the Canaanite woman who wants her daughter healed. It's perhaps her persistence, humour and refusal to be offended that makes Jesus think more deeply about the extent of his mission. That decision to extend his ministry points directly to the Great Commission, when Jesus urges his followers to go and make disciples of ALL the world.

Jesus' supplicant has three black marks before she even starts pleading with Jesus to heal her daughter - she's a Gentile, a Canaanite and a woman, so an outsider of outsiders. No wonder the disciples wanted to send her away, just as they wanted to dismiss the 5,000.

Initially Jesus ignores her - perhaps thinking through the implications of limiting his ministry -- before saying I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel; Michael Green, the great British evangelist, points out that the original Greek has no punctuation, and so could have been asking himself 'Was I sent only to the lost sheep of Israel?', putting a completely different slant on it.

We then see Jesus in his full humanity, for surely in his full divinity he would never have said It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. In fact, the Greek word translated as dogs really means puppies. Michael Green suggests that too was a question rather than a remark.

The woman then ripostes with considerable humour and brilliant insight given the apparent provocation: Yes, she says, it is right to take the children's bread and give some to the dogs. It is so reminiscent of the encounter with the Roman centurion.

Neither of them is asking for much, but at the same time the two Gentiles acknowledge Jesus' authority and power. They instinctively know who he is and that is enough.

It is her profound response that prompts Jesus to grant her wish – and to broaden his ministry. Jesus suddenly seems to understand what she is getting at. Where's my Good News, where's my place at the table?, she's asking

What's wonderful is Jesus allows himself to be changed, to be bested in argument for the only time in Scripture. As one commentator puts it, she was a gift to Jesus. God had a message for Jesus, and she was the messenger. No longer confined to Israel, the Good News suddenly becomes inclusive. And this was all predicted in this week's readings.

As Tom Wright says, it was as if the future broke into the present and the woman was demanding Easter before Jesus had even got to the Cross.

The very unsettling times we are living in right now underline the importance of the Good News being for EVERYONE. And we don't always need to wait for the future. What could we Christians make happen in the present by badgering God now as the Canaanite woman did rather than leaving difficult issues to the future?

### Prayers

**L**ord God, we bring you our thanks for the blessings you bestow upon us day by day. Above all, we thank you that you are a God for all nations and all people. Help us to reflect that in our own behaviour and attitudes. May we be open to the 'other' when they come into our lives.

God of all, give our leaders the wisdom they need to lead us through these challenging times as schools return and COVID-19 cases spike in various places. Thank you that by the grace of your Holy Spirit you give us hope for a better future.

We pray for our world at this time of huge uncertainty. As we see and hear of the ravages that the pandemic has inflicted on the economy, we pray for the hundreds of thousands of people who have lost or will lose their jobs and for their families. Stay close to all who are struggling in body, mind or spirit in the aftermath of this pandemic and for all who support and care for them.

We also ask for your blessing upon our families, friends and neighbours and we hold up to you those connected with our church families who have asked for our prayers: from St Columba's: Iain Swanney, Cllr Harry Cartmill, Rev Duncan and Marjorie Shaw, Doug and Pat Laurie, Young Harry, Paul Moffat, Anthea and Katie McAlpin, Kath Stutt and Elma Webster. And from St Peter's: Peter McOwen, Annie Gibbs (Olivia Moss's future mother in law), Anna Pink, Joe Lavery, Ronnie Adams, Chris Belton and Bob Philips (Jude and Andy's parents) Dot Pringle, Brenda Cook, Harry and Connie Payne, Father John, Ruthie Cadell, David Szkudlarek, and Jan Robson. And for all their families.

For all who have died in recent days and those who mourn. And we remember those connected with our church families whose anniversary of death falls this

week: from St Columba's: David Page, Isabella Whyte and Elizabeth Devon. And from St Peter's: Robert Alves, Dorothy Judge, Marion David and Richard Hutton.

### Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Dear Friends,

By the time you are reading this our children will be back at school and those weekday routines will be getting re-established after such a long break. For Ayla from St Columba's this has been her first few days in P1 and for Gillian, Rebecca and Fearghas from St Peter's their first days in S1, they certainly won't ever forget these first days in new environments! In our church life we are getting back to something a bit more like normal now that we have our two Sunday services and two weekday services back in our churches. Oh what a joy!

At our midweek service today (Tuesday) we had a trial of Zooming it out to a few people at home and it worked well. So, travelling as we do in hope, we are going to Zoom our live Sunday service @ 9.30am from St Peter's each week and the code will be in the Zoom Code sheet. For those joining by Zoom please make sure that your volume is turned up to maximum or near maximum once the service starts to give you the best chance of hearing!

As it isn't possible to Zoom from St Columba's; the size and the wooden floor make for too much echo we hope that members of St Columba's who aren't able to come for the 11.15am service in church will join in on the 9.30 Zoom. This means that there will not be 2pm Zoom services on Sundays. I know that 9.30am for St Columba's members is early and I am sorry if these arrangements don't suit some, but this will free up Sunday afternoons for people to be out and about. Please do get in touch if the new arrangements pose a problem for you.

### *Services for the coming week:*

#### **Sunday morning**

St Peter's short said Eucharist @9.30am – **Zoomed live**

St Columba's short said Eucharist @ 11.15am

#### **Tuesday morning**

St Peter's will be open from 10 – 12 noon

Short said Eucharist 10.30 – 11am

Private Prayer 11 – 12 noon

#### **Wednesday morning**

St Columba's will be open from 10 – 12 noon

Short said Eucharist 10.30 – 11am

Private Prayer 11 – 12 noon

Prayer Room 11.30 – 12 noon

### A reminder of St Columba's opening arrangements

The church will be maintaining a 2m separation between people (unless they are buddies).

You will be required to:

- Wear a face covering and take home for disposal
- Hand Sanitise on arrival in the vestibule area
- Give name and contact phone number on entry to the church. (The sidesperson will record it on the computer)
- Follow the sides person's instruction as to where to sit.
- At the end of the service remain seated until instructed to leave via the meeting room.
- Sanitise hand on way out (sanitiser opposite toilet doors by fire alarm).
- Toilets will remain closed but if required the sides person must be notified in order that they can be sanitised after use.

### A reminder of St Peter's opening arrangements

The following simple rules should be followed which will give all who enter the church the confidence that everything is in place to ensure their safety and well-being.

- As we all know we are a small church and have space only for 10 to allow for the necessary 2-meter distancing. To ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to come to worship at least one a month an "opt in or out" option will be offered to the congregation. This will then let us work on a schedule which will be fair to everyone. **Jane Ramsay is the contact person (843176). PLEASE LET HER KNOW BY THURSDAY OF EACH WEEK.**
- A sides person will ensure that all hands are sanitized at the front door before entering the building. Please wait until invited into the church.
- Masks must be worn and taken home for disposal.
- Entering and leaving the building will be by the red doors only.
- You will be led back out of church by our sides person, this will be done from back to front of the church. Please wait to be invited to leave.
- Hands should be sanitized when leaving church.
- Our church has been deep cleaned and undergone a "fogging" process. The fogging will continue to be done every 30 days to ensure the building is as clean and germ free as is possible.
- Toilets and *accessibility arrangements: Level access via the side door is available for those with mobility issues. A wheelchair accessible toilet is available if required and will be sanitised after use.*
- Working together as we have done in the past and will continue to do now as we slowly begin to re-enter a new way of coming to church, we will keep each other and those in our community safe and well until the day comes when we gather together once more in St Peter's as one large and very happy church family.

***NB If you have any symptoms (temperature, cough, loss of taste or smell) you should not attend church and you should book a test***

And a reminder for St Peter's, that in order to avoid unexpected contacts, for the foreseeable future Jane Ramsay will be keeping a record of requests to enter the church. Please check with her beforehand to ensure that our little church will be empty and virus free before going in. Please also let Jane know in advance if you intend to come to the Tuesday Eucharist. Jane's number is 843176

**Pastoral visits** - under phase 3 of the easing of lockdown came the possibility of my making pastoral visits again. If you would like me to visit you please do contact me. Ideally it would be best to meet in your garden or at a coffee shop perhaps but under certain circumstances, and if you were willing, I would come to visit you at home.

Lent seems such a long time ago doesn't it! But way back then many people took away tubes of Smarties as part of The Bishop's Lent Appeal for this year. I know that some tubes have been returned in both churches, thank you. If anyone has contributions to make to the two charities that Bishop John has invited us to support this year the appeal closes at the end of August. Please contact me if you would like me to collect your contribution if it isn't possible for you to drop it off at church. A reminder of this years charities:

The Open Door - an Edinburgh based project that aims to, through friendship and social clubs, reduce isolation and loneliness.

Project Embabazi - a project in SW Uganda to enable development in a number of rural communities

Thank you everyone and please do keep well, keep safe.

*Rev Christine*

## SEC Morning, Evening and Night Prayer Liturgies

Morning, Evening and Night Prayer daily liturgies are available at:  
[www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/daily-offices](http://www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/daily-offices)

Rev Christine and Rev Peter will be saying Morning Prayer @ 9am and Evening Prayer @ 6pm each day in their own homes and invite you to join in from yours. On Thursday mornings we will be sharing a virtual service via Zoom. If you would like to join in, the link every week (until September 13) will be <https://zoom.us/j/756114372>  
Any queries please contact Rev Peter [pw@woodifield.com](mailto:pw@woodifield.com)

For the coming week beginning Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August we enter into the week of Pentecost 11.

\*If you have a paper version of the big blue Prayer Book, for **Morning Prayer** we will be using the form: Week D on p. 38. Follow the psalm set for the day in Set 2. Follow the Benedictus antiphon set for the day.

**Evening Prayer** we will be using the form: Week D on p. 73

\*If you want to do it online by far the easiest way to do it is to click <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/daily-offices/> which is updated three times a day for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline

\*If you just want to do the readings and collect for each day they are as follows. (The online version of Morning Prayer uses the first two readings and Evening Prayer the third, the Gospel.)

Sunday:	Exodus 2: 23 - 3: 10;	Hebrews 13: 1 - 15;	Luke 12: 49 - 56
Monday:	Judges 17: 1 - 13;	Acts 7: 44 - 8: 1a;	John 5: 19 - 29
Tuesday:	Judges 18: 1 - 15;	Acts 8: 1 - 13;	John 5: 30 - 47
Wednesday:	Judges 18: 16 - 31;	Acts 8: 14 - 25;	John 6: 1 - 15
Thursday:	Job 1: 1 - 22;	Acts 8: 26 - 40;	John 6: 16 - 27
Friday:	Job 2: 1 - 13;	Acts 9: 1 - 9;	John 6: 27 - 40
Saturday:	Job 3: 1 - 26;	Acts 9: 10 - 19a;	John 6: 41 - 51

The Collect applies to both Morning and Evening Prayer each day.

O God, you make known your almighty power in your merciful compassion: increase your mercy towards us; that we, being eager for your promises, may inherit the treasures of heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Each day we pray for:

- The world: people, governments and leaders of the countries and specific issues arising in the news. Issues relating to social justice, peace, suffering and creation. And of course at this time for the devastating global covid-19 crisis.
- Our wider church, the SEC, our diocese, individual churches.
- Our community - residents in our area. For those with no faith, we pray for their introduction to the Christian faith, and for those with faith, that their faith may develop further.
- Those known to us who are unwell or in need.
- Our own church communities.



### Clergy contact numbers:

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### Rector's Wardens contact numbers:

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Jane Ramsay - 07982252666