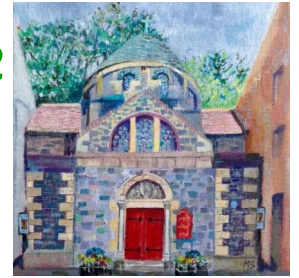




St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



Rector: Rev Christine Barclay Curate: Rev Peter Woodifield

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25th October 2020
Pentecost 21

Dear friends, as we continue to deal with the challenges of living with Covid 19 I do hope that this Sunday's readings, prayers and short reflection make a connection with your lives.

Readings

O.T.: Leviticus 19: 1 - 2, 15 - 20
N.T.: 1 Thessalonians 2: 1 - 8
Gospel: Matthew 22: 34 - 46

Collect

Lord, in your mercy: grant to your faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Reflection

If any proof was needed that Jesus came not to condemn but to save we hear it in today's Gospel reading. The religious leaders were called to follow and enforce the commandments, the laws of their ancestors - all 613 of them that govern all aspects of their lives. Laws that Jesus follows, for they are the laws of his ancestors. In our reading from Matthews Gospel the Pharisees ask Jesus a 'test' question 'which commandment in the law is the greatest?' to which Jesus answers without hesitation 'you shall love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Love God. Love your neighbour. Period! This encounter takes place just a few days before his crucifixion, death is literally breathing down Jesus' neck and he is running out of opportunities to communicate the heart of his message. When asked what is most important Jesus doesn't say, pray every day, read your bible, nor did he give instructions for worship. No, all

of Christianity Jesus distilled down to its essence so that maybe we will pause long enough to hear it. Love. But what does it mean to love? We can overuse the word 'love'; loving our favourite films, books, holidays, chocolate.....we often think of love as a feeling that arises out of our own enjoyment, our sense of affinity and connection. We don't think of it as a discipline, an effort. We fall in love, love breaks our hearts and its course never runs smoothly. But this isn't how the Bible describes love. Jesus doesn't say 'I hope that love happens to you', he says 'love is the greatest and first commandment.' Love is not a lucky accident, rather it is a matter of obedience to the one we call 'Lord.' And this is a tough call, for we have to become vulnerable to the pain of the world. We have a God who first and foremost wants our love, not our fear, not our piety, just our love. We have a God who wants every one of God's children to feel loved and loved by us. Not judged, not shamed but loved. As heirs of the Incarnation, we cannot love God while we refuse to love what God loves and love of God makes is possible for our deepening of love for our neighbour. As we journey on through this long and gruelling pandemic these commandments seem to speak directly to us in such powerful ways for this virus is a great leveller, it is no respecter of wealth or status.

Over recent months we have watched in awe those who in their day to day work have put their lives on the line fulfilling the loving of neighbour - weeping with them, feeding them, welcoming and comforting them. And so the journey continues and may it continue in love. In closing some powerful words from an American Evening Prayer liturgy: The world now is too dangerous and too beautiful for anything but love. May your eyes be so blessed to see God in everyone. Your ears, so you hear the cry of the poor. May your hands be so blessed that everything you touch is a sacrament. Your lips, so you speak nothing but the truth in love. May your feet be so blessed you run to those who need you. And may



your heart be so opened, so set on fire, that your love, *your* love, changes everything. And may the blessing of the God who created you, loves you, and sustains you, be with you now and always. Amen.

Prayers

Lord God, friend of those in need, your Son Jesus has untied our burdens and healed our spirits. In love we lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened, those seeking healing, those in need within the church and the world who are struggling with the uncertainties of life at this time. We continue to pray for our leaders and their advisers to have real wisdom in their decision-making in the coming days, weeks and months. We pray for your Church living out the gospel message of love, forgiveness, justice and hope. Pour your blessing upon all church leaders, especially Mark our Primus and John our Bishop. For the churches in the communities where we live and serve and for our church families of St Columba's and St Peter's.

We pray for all who are suffering in body, mind or spirit at this hugely challenging time and for those from our church families who have asked for our prayers, particularly Anthea McAlpin who has now been in hospital for almost three weeks:

from St Columba's: Margaret Elder, Geoffrey Gerrard, Kath Stutt, Iain Swanney, Cllr Harry Cartmill, Rev Duncan and Marjorie Shaw, Doug and Pat Laurie, Young Harry, Paul Moffat, Katie McAlpin and Elma Webster.

And from St Peter's: Rita Manion (David's mother), Annie Gibbs (Olivia Moss's future mother in law), Barry Greig (Terry's twin brother), Anna Pink, Joe Lavery, Ronnie Adams, Chris Belton and Bob Philip (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. We pray for all who have died in recent days and for all who mourn. And we remember those connected with our church families whose anniversary of death falls this week. From St Columba's: Alexander Cunningham, Frankie Alexander Currie and Henry Crow. And from St Peter's: Margaret Foster and Robert Cunningham.

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, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Notices

Dear Friends, I do hope that you and your families are keeping well and keeping your spirits up in these very challenging times. There are so many people and businesses really struggling as the current restrictions bite and hospital admissions in our region increase, putting extra pressure on our NHS. I have returned from a very good and restorative fortnight away during which we were able to celebrate my

mother's 90th birthday albeit more restrained that we would have liked. And she was so appreciative of your thoughts and good wishes. I also spent time with Claire Starr on the Black Isle and she asked to be remembered to those of you who remember her. And my thanks to Rev Peter, Jane, David and all who worked while I rested!

It seems hardly possible in this very surreal year that we are approaching the season of Remembrance which begins on Sunday 1st November with our celebration of **All Saints and All Souls**. As is our custom in marking All Souls Day we will be, after Communion, reading out the names of our dearly departed. Under normal circumstances we would have a sheet in both churches for people to add names but this year can you please email me at christine.barclay28@gmail.com or phone me on 01506 846069 or phone/message me on 07964 175914 with the names of loved ones you would like to be included.

The following Sunday - 8th November is **Remembrance Sunday**. The Act of Remembrance will begin at just after 10.55 in St Columba's and will be followed by our Sunday Eucharist. In St Peter's the Eucharist will begin 30 minutes later than usual at 10am and will continue up to the Act of Remembrance at 11am.

Life as we know it has been so curtailed in recent months but the life of the church goes on and we are now in the season of our **AGMs**. As I am required canonically to do, I give notice that St Peter's has set the date for Sunday 15th November for its AGM which will follow our Eucharist. Copies of the annual accounts and all reports will be available on-line and in paper format well in advance. Our constitution states that one person steps down from vestry each year and Sue Rippon, having faithfully and cheerfully served for 6 years, is taking the opportunity to step down. This leaves one position to be filled and nomination forms will be available in church from Sunday and from Catherine our Vestry Secretary ctfowler15@gmail.com, to whom all completed nomination forms should be returned. Please remember that the person nominating requires the agreement of the person they are nominating and also a seconder.

Details of St Columba's AGM date to follow.

In Advent Rev Peter will be running a study based on Paula Gooder's book 'Journey to the Manger'. It will be on Zoom, making it easier for people to participate, and he will try to make it more interactive. Please let Peter know by email (pw@woodifield.com), mobile (07747023108), WhatsApp, or in person if you would like to join. Friday afternoons seemed to suit most people, but he is open to alternative suggestions. In any event it will run for four weeks starting in the last full week of November.

Sunday morning services from St Peter's @ 9.30 continue to be Zoomed live. Those who are joining us from home are asked to ensure that your speaker volume is turned

up to maximum; and there is a separate attachment in the notices of a Eucharist prayer that you may like to say as you receive Communion spiritually. **IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE.** You now will need a passcode to join the Zoom service (this is due to Zoom’s security upgrade). The meeting code is unchanged at 118 321 305. The passcode you need is 670383. Judy Goldfinch will send round the embedded link with the weekly list of Zoom codes. 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 – 11.30 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 masks and take them home for disposal
- Hand Sanitise on arrival in the vestibule area
- Give name and contact phone number on entry to the church. (The sides person 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). The accessible toilet will be open but please follow the one-way system and follow the instructions for sanitising before and 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. Tuesday morning and Sunday morning services are now well attended. If you would like to have a place at either of the services, please contact Jane Ramsay who will ensure that the places are fairly distributed each week. Tel 843176 or email her jane.ramsay48@gmail.com. **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 sanitised when leaving church.

Our church has been deep cleaned and undergone a “fogging” process. We will continue to “fog” on a quarterly basis as recommended by the cleaning firm who will be professionally cleaning the church on a monthly basis for the foreseeable future. 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. Jane’s number is 843176.

Pastoral visits – sadly, the new guidelines mean that pastoral visits to people’s homes, including for home communion, are not possible at this time, except in extreme circumstances. Hopefully this restriction won’t be for too long. And please remember that I hold you all in my prayers. Also, at this time we have been advised by the Bishop’s Advisory Group that giving lifts to people, out-with your household, to church is not possible either at this time. This is slightly different to the government guidelines which say ‘not advised’.

Zoom Coffee and chat once a fortnight on a Monday morning. The next one will be held on 26th October @ 11.15. ID 5111791282 password 3i1TYq.

NB The clocks go back an hour this weekend! Please do look after yourselves and keep well and 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

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 will be <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/756114372?pwd=ZXpMWndaY210empVY1daL09paGlwZz09>

Any queries please contact Rev Peter pw@woodifield.com

For the coming week beginning Sunday 25th October we enter into the week of Pentecost 21.

*If you have a paper version of the big blue Prayer Book, for

Morning Prayer we will be using the form: Week B on p. 32. 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 B on p. 67

*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:	Ecclesiastes 12: 1 – 14;	1 Corinthians 10: 15 – 24;	Luke 18: 9 – 14
Monday:	Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 19: 4 – 17;	Revelation 11: 1 – 14;	Luke 11: 14 – 26
Tuesday:	Ecclesiasticus 24: 1 – 12;	Revelation 11: 14 – 19;	Luke 11: 27 – 36
Wednesday:	Ecclesiasticus 28: 14 – 26;	Revelation 12: 1 – 6;	Luke 11: 37 – 52
Thursday:	Ecclesiasticus 31: 12 – 18, 25 – 32: 2;	Revelation 12: 7 – 17;	Luke 11: 53 – 12: 12
Friday:	Ecclesiasticus 34: 1 – 8;	Revelation 13: 1 – 10;	Luke 12: 13 – 31
Saturday:	Ecclesiasticus 35: 1 – 17;	Revelation 13: 11 – 18;	Luke 12: 32 – 48

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

O Lord, in your mercy: grant to your faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

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:

Rev Christine – 07964175914; 01334769303
Rev Peter Woodifield – 07747023108

Rector's Wardens contact numbers:

David Graham Service – 07901947345
Jane Ramsay - 07982252666