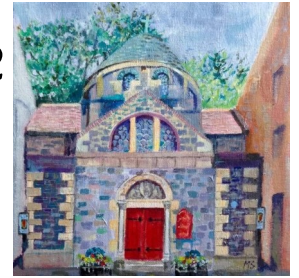




St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



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22nd November 2020
Christ the King

Dear friends, the church year ends this Sunday with the Feast of Christ the King when we are invited to reflect upon the glorious contrast between the high office, power and authority given to the Messiah and the tender humility in which he interacts with his people. I do hope that the readings, prayers and short reflection make a connection with your lives.

Readings

O.T.: Ezekiel 34: 11 - 16, 20 - 24

N.T.: Ephesians 1: 15 - 23

Gospel: Matthew 25: 31 - 46

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in the kingdom of your well-beloved Son: mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, now divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Reflection

This week the Church celebrates the Reign of Christ, a liturgical hinge between the long "Season After Pentecost," and the beginning of Advent. We pause this week to reflect on the meaning of Christ's reign over the Church, the world, and our lives. What kind of king is Jesus? What does his rule look and feel like? What does it mean to live and thrive under his kingship?

Given the power and pageantry we typically associate with kings, we might expect the

lectionary to give us readings that sound, well, *kingly*. Something gorgeous from the Book of Revelation, perhaps, about Jesus decked out in splendid robes and a jewelled crown. Or something majestic from Isaiah: "A son will be given to us, and the government will rest upon his shoulders." Or at least a shiny moment from the Gospels: Jesus transfigured on the mountaintop. Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus emerging from the waters of baptism, heaven thundering in

his ears. But no. The royalty Jesus describes in Matthew's Gospel is of another order, entirely. It is homeless Jesus. Sick Jesus. Imprisoned Jesus. Hungry Jesus. Naked Jesus. A humble, wounded king, not the kingly version of domination, supremacy and greatness. Jesus is the king who entered humanity as a vulnerable baby born in a stable, a king whose greatest displays of power including riding on a donkey, washing dirty feet, hanging on a cross. A God who perpetually pours himself out for others and surrenders his life for his loved ones. Jesus is in the least and the lost and the broken and the wounded. Jesus is in the un-pretty places. Do we see him there, among the millions struck down with Covid, many struggling to breathe, those facing financial ruin as a result of this pandemic, the countless struggling with mental issues?

Likewise, there is no way around the perplexing fact that our lectionary reading - a reading that describes the final judgment of all humanity - says nothing about belief. Our reading depicts a scene from the heavenly throne room. It's a scene describing the culmination of history, when all nations will gather before Christ, and Christ will separate his people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Notice the criteria he'll use for the separation. What will it be? Not our confessions of faith. Not our beliefs, not our doctrinal commitments, not our "personal relationships" with Jesus. The criteria will be compassion, and compassion alone. As one writer put it "The Son who 'sits upon his glorious throne with all the nations gathered before him' is the same one who, at the very apex of his cosmic power, reveals that the universe turns upon a cup of water given to the

littlest ones in his name." And if we're not at least a little bit unnerved, then we're not paying enough attention! Soon, we will enter into Advent, a season of waiting, longing, and listening. Soon we will walk into the expectant darkness, waiting for the light to dawn, for the first cries of a vulnerable baby to redefine kingship, authority, and power forever. But on this Sunday, here and now, we are asked to see Jesus in places we'd rather not look. We are asked to remember that every encounter we have



with “the least of these” is an actual encounter with Jesus. It’s not a metaphor. It’s not wordplay. It’s not optional. The person huddled beneath the blanket is our king.

Prayers

Let us pray to our heavenly Father who created all things in heaven and on earth. He knows our needs and the needs of the world and reaches out with love and forgiveness to reconcile all things to himself. He asks us to see Jesus in all people, especially in those many in society would rather turn away from. We pray for the church throughout the world for a healing of divisions and wounds that divide us and pray that the church, Christ’s body, may be united and strengthened by Christ himself. We ask your blessing upon our SEC, on Primus Mark and Bishop John and the churches and communities of our diocese. At this time of unimaginable uncertainty worldwide we pray for our leaders, scientists and all in positions of authority to have the task of guiding us through this pandemic, and for our NHS working under such pressure.

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, from St Columba’s: Eric Dobson, Anthea and Katie McAlpin, Geoffrey Gerrard, Kath Stutt, Rev Duncan and Marjorie Shaw, Doug and Pat Laurie, Young Harry, Paul & Janice Moffat 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, Bob Philip (Andy’s father) 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 those 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 Imrie, Harold Turner, Olive Morrison, Ronald Newell, Barry Watson, Annie McClure, Irene Stevenson, James Bremner, Marion Mitchell and Bill Laidlaw.

And from St Peter’s: Edith Soper, Katherine Eriksen, Alexina Stedward, Charles Soper, Mary Jamieson, Sadie Taylor, Honour Tindall and Agnes Bianchi.

Heavenly Father, you have rescued us from the power of darkness, help us to walk in this world as citizens of your kingdom of light where Christ reigns as King in glory for ever and ever.

Blessing

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Notices

Dear Friends, these are very challenging times indeed aren’t they? Tomorrow our local high streets will once more be quiet as non-essential shops and businesses close for three weeks to try to stem the march of Covid through our communities. But some small measure in comfort for churches as, unlike England, we are still permitted to meet for public worship and as small churches we won’t feel the bite as much as larger churches now that the maximum number permitted for worship has been capped at a maximum of 20 for Level 4. The seriousness of these measures reminds us of our need to be vigilant in maintaining our 2m distances, not just in our seating but when we are coming in and out of church. And of the need to exit the building in timely manner after worship. Our natural instinct is to have a word or three but in order to comply with the guidelines we really do have to refrain, and that also goes for gathering out on the pavement at St Peter’s. I can’t wait for the week when I can say: stay and chat, give each other a hug but for now I have to remind myself, as well as our church families, of the reality of what we are able to do. And hopefully this Level 4 will only be for three weeks and then maybe we can look with hope to an easing of restrictions over Christmas. Next week we will be publishing details of our plans for the run up to Christmas and there are a number of things to look forward to, I promise! Please do be assured of my love and prayers at this grim time.

NB St Columba’s AGM on Sunday 29th November will now take place at 4pm via Zoom. The change reflects some of the extra complications of the new restrictions and echo that those joining by Zoom would have to put up with. The AGM will come from the Rectory and won’t take long as we will follow the procedure we would have had in church ie we will take it as read that everyone will have read all of the reports, either on line or in paper format, and any comments and questions sent in advance to Jim Adamson our Vestry Secretary. We have a few vestry places available including the one being vacated by Sandra Dobson who is stepping down this year. Nomination forms for appointing someone to vestry are available from Jim Adamson. We will require 20 to be quorate so please do join the meeting. Meeting ID: 827 9658 9373 Passcode: 569791

Worship at St Peter’s this Sunday - I am very happy to advise that Rev Jim Mein will be presiding and preaching at St Peter’s. The Family Service begins @ 12.30, and because of the social distancing measures seats in church are booked up already so we will be zooming the service to enable more people to join in. The Zoom meeting code and password will be the same one as for Sunday morning: Meeting ID 118 321 305. Passcode 670383

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 Peter will be trying 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 27th November will be the starting date.

Knitted Angels - In the current edition of Life Together there is a pattern for knitting angels, I know that there is some serious clicking of knitting needles in both St Columba's and St Peter's but we need lots of angels. St Columba's will be giving many of theirs to Meadowvale Care home for the residents, families and staff as well as neighbours. St Peter's angels will be distributed around Linlithgow as part of a Linlithgow Churches initiative. 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 but the moving of the organ allows us to have 14 still allowing for the necessary 2-meter distancing. Tuesday morning



and Sunday morning services are now well attended. Everyone is welcome and 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 sanitised 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 fogged. We will continue to "fog" on a quarterly basis as recommended by the cleaning firm who will also 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'.

And sadly, under the new level restrictions people living in a level below are not permitted to travel to a level 4 area for worship. Hopefully this will only be for a short time.

Zoom Coffee and chat once a fortnight on a Monday morning. Next one will be held on 23rd November @ 11.15. ID 5111791282 password 3i1TYq.

Please 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=ZXpMWndaY210empVY1daL09paGhwZz09>
Any queries please contact Rev Peter pw@woodifield.com

For the coming week beginning Sunday 22nd November we enter into the week of Pentecost 25.

*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 and the Gospel.)

Sunday:	Daniel 5: (1 -12), 13 - 30; Revelation 11: 15 - 18;	John 6: 1 - 15
Monday:	Zechariah 10: 1 - 12; Galatians 6: 1 - 10;	Luke 18: 15 - 30
Tuesday:	Zechariah 11: 4 - 17; 1 Corinthians 3: 10 - 23;	Luke 18: 31 - 43
Wednesday:	Zechariah 12: 1 - 10; Ephesians 1: 3 -14;	Luke 19: 1 - 10
Thursday:	Zechariah 13: 1 - 9; Ephesians 1: 15 - 23;	Luke 19: 11 - 27
Friday:	Zechariah 14: 1 - 11; Romans 15: 7 - 13;	Luke 19: 28 - 40
Saturday:	Zechariah 14: 12 - 21; Philippians 2: 1 - 11;	Luke 19: 41 - 48

The Collects applies to both Morning and Evening Prayer

Collect for Christ the King (Sunday November 22)

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in the kingdom of your well-beloved Son: mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, now divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Collect for the rest of the week

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people: that they, richly bearing the fruit of good works, may by you be richly rewarded; 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:

Rev Christine – 07964175914; 01334769303
Rev Peter Woodifield – 07747023108

Rector's Wardens contact numbers:

David Graham Service – 07901947345
Jane Ramsay - 07982252666