



St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



Rector: Rev Christine Barclay Curate: Rev Peter Woodifield

The Rectory
85 Acredales
LINLITHGOW
EH49 6JA
Tel: 07964 175 914

Tel: 07747 023 108

**15th November 2020
Margaret of Scotland**

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

Readings

O.T.: Proverbs 31: 10 - 13, 25 - 31
N.T.: 2 Timothy 1: 1 - 7;
Gospel: Matthew 13: 44 - 46.

Collect

Almighty God, who called your servant Margaret to an earthly throne that she might advance your heavenly kingdom, and endued her with zeal for your Church and charity towards your people: mercifully grant that we, who commemorate her example, may be fruitful in good works and attain to the glorious company of your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Reflection

Today we are celebrating the Feast of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland. Pious, and a true seeker after God, even she fails to match the virtue of the wife in our Proverbs reading, who appears to be the only woman in history who embodies the modern feminist rallying cry You can have it all. I don't think I'm best qualified to write about that subject!

Markie, my wife, has been a Christian as long as she can remember but would say that for many years she was searching for what she called a living faith. It wasn't until her mid-to-late 20s that she found what she was looking for when we were living in London and we had been worshiping for a time at Holy Trinity Brompton, the home of the Alpha course.

To me Markie is the best example I know of the pearl hunter, not least because Margaret, which Markie is short for, means pearl, a reason perhaps why this parable is offered as one of today's Gospel readings. The pearl hunter was someone who knew beauty when he saw it, but who was also convinced that there was a perfect pearl out there to be found if only he kept looking, and when he did find it, he sold everything to possess it. Equally, there are people who bump into the Kingdom of Heaven rather like the man who accidentally stumbled on the treasure, who buried it and joyfully sold all he had to buy the whole field. Some people may say he was a swindler, but finders, keepers is how Rabbinic law worked.

I like to imagine that sort of person as someone stubbing their toe on the word of God, looking down and suddenly thinking 'Oh wow, this is real, I want this even though I didn't know I did'. It's almost as if God plonked himself in their path so they couldn't miss him. It really doesn't matter whether we stumble on the Kingdom of God or intentionally search it out. It is treasure worth everything we've got, a treasure that brings immense joy. In the list in Galatians 5 of the fruit of the Spirit, joy comes second only to love. The way Jesus describes it in these two parables gives the lie to the idea that Christianity is like any other religion. The kingdom of God, reached through Jesus, is the biggest, finest, most lustrous, most valuable pearl there is. In ancient times pearls were regarded as the very best thing that earth had to offer.

We need to respond to it like that, to treasure it, to realise that it is beyond compare. And the amazing thing is that it's a free gift. When we accept it, we realise that most of the rest of the stuff we have in our lives pales by comparison and we're better off without it. The trouble is that all that stuff, success, fame, money, possessions, whatever it is we aspire to or dream of, can look



very attractive and hard to give up. Now it may be that God doesn't require us to give up all or any of them, but we have to be ready to.

Now at a time like this the kingdom of God can seem really far away as the ravages of COVID-19 continue to wreak havoc in all sorts of ways, let alone all the other problems in the world. But the reality is that the kingdom of heaven is always closer to us than we think, even when we can't see it because it's underground or underwater – and we really need to hang on to that. Because all too often we can forget that God has deliberately and freely chosen to bless us. I find that absolutely amazing, that God has freely chosen to bless us with all our weaknesses and failings, that he has freely chosen us to be his blessing to all those people who don't yet realise that God wants to freely bless them too. That is the Gospel of hope that we have both to claim for ourselves and to offer freely to others. Perhaps what these parables are saying above all is that being the unmerited recipients of God's freely given blessing really is worth everything we have, because, as Paul tells us, nothing, but nothing, not any of the awfulness happening in our world today, can separate us from the love of God – ever.

Prayers

As we commemorate and give thanks for the life and legacy of St Margaret of Scotland, we pray that her gifts of generosity, zeal and wisdom be an example for us today. Give us compassionate hearts to pray to reach out to those who are struggling at this time. Give us patience and perseverance for this long journey through this pandemic and tolerance when frustration and disappointment threaten to overwhelm us. We pray for the nations and leaders of the world at this time for wisdom and courage in their decision making. For our island nation during these challenging times. For our prime minister and the first ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For president elect Joe Biden and the citizens of the US. For all scientists working on vaccines and treatments for covid-19 and for our NHS under increasing strain as winter approaches. We ask your blessing upon your church worldwide and upon our SEC, on Primus Mark and Bishop John and the churches and communities of our diocese.

We pray for shops and businesses, schools and services around West Lothian and all who work to support others during the challenges we are facing. 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 McAlpin, Geoffrey Gerrard, Kath Stutt, 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, 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, especially Iain Swanney (Rachel's father) and Chris Belton (Jude's mother) 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: Mike Barron, Nessie fish, Andrew Allen and Christina Cunningham. And from St Peter's: Frank Swires, Eileen McIndoe, Albert Earle, Peter Lawton and Robert Martin.

Prayer after Communion

Father, we thank you for your servant Margaret, in whom we see the loving service of Christ. May we who receive these holy mysteries be faithful in the ministry to which you call us; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing

Christ our king make you faithful and strong to do his will, that you may reign with him in glory; 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, here we are almost at the end of another week in this very strange time. In these closing weeks of this Church Year we are in the season of Remembrance and this is one year none of us will have any problem remembering, hopefully among the memories will be some positives though – the slower pace, the kindness of strangers and so many more blessings.

Thankfully, throughout these uncertain times the life of church moves ever forward, in the church seasons for worship and in the 'holy business' of AGMs. And like so much of life our AGMs will be different this year too. Under government guidelines meetings in church are not permitted and we are getting around this by having the AGM as part of our service and so must ensure that we are very concise with our timing. We have to 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 our Vestry Secretaries – Jim Adamson for St Columba's and Catherine Fowler from St Peter's. This will enable us to comply with government guidelines that are so much part of our lives at the moment.

St Peter's AGM is coming Sunday – 15th November. Worship begins at the normal time of 9.30 and our AGM will begin around 10am. Both the service and the AGM will be available on Zoom. All of the places in church have been booked so please do join us on Zoom. May I remind you that there is one place on vestry vacant, nomination forms are available from our Vestry

Secretary Catherine and should be returned to her by Saturday please.

St Columba's AGM will be held on Sunday 29th November. It too will be part of our worship that begins at 11.15 with the AGM timed for around 11.45 and will be available on Zoom. Please do come alone either in person or via Zoom if you can, we require 20 to be quorate. Nomination forms for appointing someone to vestry are available from 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.

On Sunday 22nd November St Peter's will be having a short **Family Service** @ 12.30. Thank you to those who have booked seats. We are exploring if we can Zoom this service to enable those who cannot attend in person to be part of this short worship, as well as St Columba's families.

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@woodfield.com), mobile (07747023108), WhatsApp, or in person if you would like to join. Friday 27th November will be the starting date, NOT November as announced in church last Sunday. 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 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 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'.

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=ZXpMWndaY210empVY1daL09paGluZz09>

Any queries please contact Rev Peter pw@woodifield.com

For the coming week beginning Sunday 15th November we enter into the week of Pentecost 24.

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

Morning Prayer we will be using the form: Week A on p. 29. 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 A on p. 64

*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:	Daniel 3: 13 – 30; 1	Revelation 4: 1 – 11;	Matthew 13: 24 – 30, 36 – 43
Monday:	Habakkuk 2: 1 – 4, 9 – 20;	James 2: 14 – 26;	Luke 16: 19 – 31
Tuesday:	Habakkuk 3: 1 – 10, (11 – 15), 16 – 18;	James 3: 1 – 12;	Luke 17: 1 – 10
Wednesday:	Malachi 1: 1, 6 – 14;	James 3: 13 – 4: 12;	Luke 17: 11 – 19
Thursday:	Malachi 2: 1 – 16;	James 4: 13 – 5: 6;	Luke 17: 20 – 37
Friday:	Malachi 3: 1 – 12;	James 5: 7 – 12;	Luke 18: 1 – 8
Saturday:	Malachi 3: 13 – 4: 6;	James 5: 13 – 20;	Luke 18: 9 – 14

The Collects applies to both Morning and Evening Prayer.

O Lord, forgive the transgressions of your people: and by your goodness release us from the snare of sin, in which, by our frailty, we have been caught; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

The Collect for Monday November 15, the Feast of St Margaret

Almighty God, who called your servant Margaret to an earthly throne that she might advance your heavenly kingdom, and endued her with zeal for your Church and charity towards your people: mercifully grant that we, who commemorate her example, may be fruitful in good works and attain to the glorious company of your saints; 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