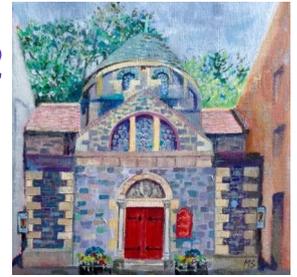




# St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



**Rector: Rev Christine Barclay**    **Curate: Rev Peter Woodifield**

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20<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Advent 4

**D**ear friends, this Sunday we gear up a notch as we approach Christmastide, both in our churches and in our worship and readings. Our theme this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent is Joy. Joy that is at the heart of the whole Christmas story. I do hope that the readings, prayers and short reflection bring joy to your hearts as we journey ever closer to the manger.

### Readings

2 Samuel 7: 1 – 11, 16  
Romans 16: 25 – 27  
Luke 1: 26 – 38

### Prayer for our 4<sup>th</sup> Advent Candle

**C**andle of Joy. Joy is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle, we celebrate the joy we find in Jesus Christ. Thank you, God, for the joy you give us. We ask that as we wait for all your promises to come true, and for Christ to come again, that you would remain present with us. Help us today, and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your joy with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.

### Collect

**S**tir up your power, Lord, and come: and strengthen us by the might of your love; that, although we are hindered by our sins, your abundant grace and mercy may quickly come and save us; for you live and reign with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

### Reflection

**W**hen King David is filled with enthusiasm for building a great and holy temple to house the ark of the covenant, his offer is turned down, but the graciousness of his attitude is very much acceptable to God. Through the prophet Nathan, God points out to David that the seeming permanence of a grand building is nothing to be compared with the real permanence of the eternally present God. With such a

nature there is no problem with flexibility; eternal Presence can move wherever the people go, free of structural foundations. Having assured King David that the building idea will be taken up by his son, God reveals his own blueprint for an everlasting kingdom, and the coming of a reign within the royal House of David which will eventually spread throughout the whole world. It is out of this promise that the hope of God's Messiah was born, particularly in the dark years following the collapse of the monarchy.

Gradually the understanding of this Messiah became less tied in people's minds with temporal ruling power and more with a priestly kind of kingship which would bring worldwide blessing and hope. So, when we find Gabriel visiting Mary with a message that her son will reign on the throne of his ancestor David, and his kingdom will never end, we are listening in on a gathering together of all the hopes and longings of generations, right back to King David himself. By this time, the overtones of a Messianic priestly kingship will be there, and through Mary those hopes and plans can be accomplished for the saving of the whole world. Christmas is coming, the angel visits Mary and she is unique among women. But the message to her is also a message to you and to me, for we too are highly favoured, the Lord is with us so we should not be afraid, rather we should be ready for the Lord to work wonders in us.

We see in Mary's faithfulness the model for the way the grace of God can and will, albeit in smaller ways, use each one of us. Can we respond with 'here am I', offer our lives to God and let the Holy Spirit guide us? None of us will experience a call as world changing as the one Gabriel announced to Mary, but the effect of each follower of Jesus listening and discerning how God will use them is what the Holy Spirit uses to reconcile all creations to God. Was there ever a more urgent time to take this message on board than this Christmas when our fragile and confused world is in so much need of



hope, hope that comes with human hands, for God has no hands but our hands. 'Here am I'. Amen.

### Prayers

**L**oving God, as we approach the day of Christ's birth help us to throw wide the doors of our hearts in preparation. Help us to sense the importance of what happened so long ago when Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel, to remember the words of the angels and the prophets and the teachers of old, and to celebrate all the promises that you made through them. Help us to take firm hold of the meaning of all these things and to know in the depths of our being that even now you are seeking to work in us and through us to fulfil the promises you have made.



Lord, may this Christmas season be for us and for those around us a season of healing, may it be a season of hope and of love and of joy, that in spite of the many challenges to our lives at present and the smaller sizes of our family gatherings this year, it may be a time of true sharing and of rejoicing in all the earth.

**W**e pray for the leaders of the world that you would give them wisdom and courage in the decisions and actions they must take. We pray for Your Church around the world, especially for those who are persecuted for their faith. We pray for our own Scottish Episcopal Church, especially for our Primus Mark and Bishop John and all who lead. We pray for all for whom Jesus came to serve, the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the anxious and lonely and the prisoner.

We pray for all who are suffering in body, mind or spirit at this Christmastide and for those from our church families who have asked for our prayers, from St Columba's: Pam Macdonald, Carol Main, Eric Dobson, Anthea & 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: Harold Wilson, William David Homewood, Albert Allan, Catherine Main. And from St Peter's: William David Homewood, Ellen McLaren, Jean Murrie and Helen Atine.

### Blessing

**C**hrist the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

### Notices

**D**ear Friends, our Advent journey takes us ever closer to Bethlehem and the message of Christmas – that in the baby asleep in the crib we see that God has come to us and is with us. God is here, whatever we are facing either personally or as a nation or world. This is the message of hope that we hold onto during this time of having to make difficult choices for our Christmas arrangements. But the good news is that Christmastide officially starts this Sunday and very welcome it is too in this year of all years.

For those who will be joining in our Zoom services this Christmastide electronic copies of the running order of 9 Lessons and Carols on Sunday evening and the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve will be sent out with this week's electronic mailing along with the worship service leaflet for the Christmas Eve Eucharist and the Christmas/Epiphany Season. We are looking forward very much to seeing our children on Zoom sharing their version of the Nativity with us during our Eucharist this Sunday.

On the theme of hope, when I suggested to my clergy colleagues in Linlithgow about an ecumenical project to knit angels and distribute them around the town, I hoped that we would have reasonable response. St Peter's folk took up the challenge and to my delight this week we received more than 450 from our friends in the other churches. Well, I was speechless! Today Jane and I safely packed them into little bags with a Christmas message and early next week they will be distributed around the town. St Columba's folk also took up the challenge and fifty ++ angels have been safely packed and are resting before being taken to Meadowvale Care home at the weekend. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this project to bring a smile and some hope to those who receive or find a little angel this Christmas.

### Services at St. Columba over Christmas:

Sunday 20th December Advent 4 11.15am  
Wednesday 23rd December Morning Eucharist 10.30am  
Thursday 24th December Midnight Mass 11.30pm  
Collection for Aberlour Child Care Trust  
Sunday 27th December 1st Sunday of Christmas 11.15am  
Wednesday 30th December Reserved Sacrament 10.30am (David G-S)  
Sunday 3rd January Epiphany @ 11.15am  
Other Services via ZOOM (codes on separate sheet)  
Sunday 20th December 9 Lessons & Carols 6.30pm (St Peter's)  
Thursday 24th December Christingle 4.00pm (St Peter's)  
Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve Eucharist 7.00pm (St Peter's)  
Friday 25th December Christmas Day Eucharist 10.00am (St Peter's) (The Christmas Day service will be the usual Sunday link).

St Columba's will be supporting Aberlour Children's Charity again this year.

There will be a retiring collection at the Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist and a fundraising event when we can get back into church again.

Services at St. Peter's over Christmas  
 Sunday 20th December Advent 4 with Nativity 9.30am 9 Lessons and Carols 6.30pm (via Zoom)  
 Tuesday 22nd December Morning Eucharist 10.30am  
 Thursday 24th December Christingle @ 4pm (in church and via Zoom)  
 Christmas Eve Eucharist 7pm (in church and via Zoom)  
 Friday 25th December Christmas Day Eucharist @ 10am (in church and via Zoom)  
 Sunday 27th December 1st Sunday of Christmas @ 9.30 (Rev Tim Tunley)  
 Tuesday 29th December Reserved Sacrament @ 10.30am (Ian Wallace)  
 Sunday 3rd January Epiphany @ 9.30am

St Peter's will be supporting CHAS again this Christmas; there will be retiring collections at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services and Sunday School are just finalising a special initiative. Final details next week. NB Sunday evenings Joint Churches Nine Lessons and Carols from St Peter's will be a one-off singing event in church this Christmas! With only Judy Barker, on organ, Peter Lewis on IT and me leading the service actually in church we are able to have Ian Wallace sing the carols live. It really is a 'for one night only' event, a wonderful opportunity for our church families to join in from home singing the carols we all love so well.

The Joint Churches Christingle Service in St Peter's will be as different this year as all our other Christmas services but no less meaningful - filled as it will be with the joy of the coming Christmas day. This year there will be room for 16 in the Church at 4 p.m. those who come please bring your own home-made Christingles which will be lit by our Rector. Those of you at home and watching via zoom can feel part of the service by having your own Christingles ready to light at the same time as those in the church. Please let Jane Ramsay know if you would like a seat in the church by Tuesday of next week. Whether you are coming as a family group, a couple or as a single, you will be warmly welcomed wherever you may be.

Bathgate Churches Together - The Wreath of Remembrance is making its way around our Bathgate Churches, being with us yesterday. This coming Sunday afternoon (20<sup>th</sup>) it will form part of this year's Christmastide Service that Rev Chris Galbraith conducts in the Co-op Funeral Parlour. This service begins at 2pm and will be available on Zoom. The meeting code is: 86005643121. Password: 113293. All are welcome.

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; the Notices include a Eucharist prayer that you may like to say as you spiritually receive Communion.

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.



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. Please let Jane Ramsay know by Thursday of each week if you would like to attend the service on either Sunday or Tuesday morning. Accessible access is available and all safety and cleaning measures remain in place. Please also contact Jane 843176 if you require to enter the church for any reason out with the service times. Thank you.

Pastoral visits - sadly, the current 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. Giving lifts to people, out-with your household, to church is still not possible either at this time, nor is travelling to a level 4 area for worship.

Zoom Coffee and Chat on a Monday morning. Next one will be held on December 21 @ 11.15. ID 5111791282 password 3i1TYq.

Finally, this final week of Christmas preparations is so very different this year, please do remember that Peter and I hold you all in our prayers. Come, O come Emanuel

*Rev Christine*

**ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH FLOWERS:** The flower rota is now available for 2021. If you would like to add your name to it please let David Graham-Service know by Text, email, WhatsApp group, phone or in person in church. The list will be updated and on display in the meeting room above the units. If you wish to do them yourself on your selected date - great. If you would like them done for you please speak with Maureen Young.

Please feel free to bring any Christmas presents with you - whether you are coming to church on Christmas Day or will be on Zoom.

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

Any queries please contact Rev Peter [pw@woodifield.com](mailto:pw@woodifield.com)

For the coming week beginning Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December we enter into the week of 4 Advent.

\*If you have a paper version of the big blue Prayer Book, for Morning Prayer we will be using the form: Anticipation on p. 11. Follow the psalm set for the day in Set 1. Follow the Benedictus antiphon set for the day. On Christmas Day we will use the form: Incarnation on p.14.

Evening Prayer we will be using the form: Anticipation on p. 46. On Christmas Day we will use the form: Incarnation on p. 49

\*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:        | Isaiah 11: 10 – 16;                     | Revelation 20:11 – 21:8;       | Luke 1: 5 – 25              |
| Monday:        | Isaiah 28: 9 – 22: 1;                   | Revelation 21: 9 – 21;         | Luke 1: 26 – 38             |
| Tuesday:       | Isaiah 29: 13 – 24;                     | Revelation 21: 22 – 22: 5;     | Luke 1: 39 – 48a (48b – 56) |
| Wednesday:     | Isaiah 33: 13 – 24;                     | Revelation 22: 6 –11, 18 – 20; | Luke 1: 57 – 66             |
| Christmas Eve: | Isaiah 35: 1 – 10;                      | Revelation 22: 12 – 17, 21;    | Luke 1: 67 – 80             |
| Christmas Day: | Zechariah 2: 10– 13; 1 John 4: 17 – 16; | John 3: 31 – 36                |                             |
| Boxing Day:    | 2 Chronicles 24: 17 – 22;               | Acts 6: 1 – 7;                 | Matthew 23: 34 – 39         |

#### *The Collect applies to both Morning and Evening Prayer*

Stir up your power, Lord, and come: and strengthen us by the might of your love; that, although we are hindered by our sins, your abundant grace and mercy may quickly come and save us; for you live and reign with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

#### *The Collect for Christmas Day*

O God our Father, the light of whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: grant that the radiance of that true light, which enlightens our minds by faith, may shine brightly through our words and deeds; 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.

#### **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.



*The Illustration on the front cover is taken from an embroidery created by June Bremner from St Columba's Church, Bathgate © JEB 2020*

#### **Clergy contact numbers:**

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Rev Peter Woodifield – 07747023108

#### **Rector's Wardens contact numbers:**

David Graham Service – 07901947345  
Jane Ramsay - 07982252666