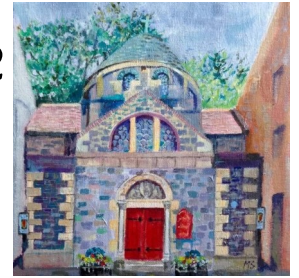




St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



Rector: Rev Christine Barclay Curate: Rev Peter Woodifield

The Rectory

85 Acredales

LINLITHGOW

EH49 6JA

Tel: 07964 175 914

Tel: 07747 023 108

13th June 2021
Pentecost 3

DEAR FRIENDS, as we journey through Ordinary Time, although there is nothing 'ordinary' as far as God is concerned, I hope that these readings, prayers and reflections on the third Sunday after Pentecost make a connection with you and fill you with hope and encouragement.

Collect

OLORD, you always guide your people whom you build up on the foundation of your love: make us ever stand in awe of your Holy Name, and love you in equal measure; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Readings

Ezekiel 17: 22-24

2 Corinthians 5: 6 – 10, (11-13), 14-17

Mark 4: 26-34

Reflection

This spring was the coldest I can remember. Living next to a farm, I was very aware of this because there was little or no growth in the fields for the ewes needing nourishment to feed their lambs and so the farmer was worried about running out of hay and silage before the animals could rely on new growth in the fields.

Do you know what happens between planting a seed and signs of life emerging a few days or even a few weeks later? Yes, we know it germinates and that warmth and moisture in the ground help speed up growth, but do we understand exactly what happens? We would like to know because then we might have a better chance of ensuring success. If I can do A then B will happen, we all like that sense of control.

Yet in these two short parables, Jesus tells us very clearly that this is not the way God works. In the first parable, the sower plants the seeds

and the seeds grow while the sower sleeps. It's very like the more widely known parable of the sower earlier in the chapter where the farmer sows extravagantly, not worrying where the seed will land, and leaves the rest to God. Here, Jesus says, the soil does all the work and the seeds fend for themselves. The earth produces on its own

But we know as gardeners that it's not as simple as that. We obsess about weeding, watering, thinning, fertilising, netting, pruning and whatever else might need doing.

This farmer does the opposite of all that. Yes, the farmer knows the time to plant, but after that it's all a matter of trust, trusting the seeds, the soil and the weather to do their stuff until it's time to harvest. The idea that the farmer is in charge is an illusion. Everything that comes from the land is a result of grace.

In a sense we live between the planting and the harvest – a time of mystery. When we 'plant' our prayers do we have the faith to leave them there and let the soil do its work?

In the second parable, someone plants a mustard seed, which spreads like Russian vine or Japanese knotweed rather than grow into a pleasingly-shaped tree and under which birds shelter – and not

necessarily the birds you might want in your garden. After all farmers put up scarecrows to frighten birds away.

In any event people didn't plant mustard seeds in Jesus' day because they were basically regarded as a weed. As they say, of course, a weed is only a flower in the 'wrong' place.

So something that most people would avoid or discard seems to be at the heart of God's kingdom

It's almost as if Jesus is saying – be careful what you wish for. You may





think you want to see God's Kingdom, but it's not going to look like anything you can imagine and you certainly can't control it. In fact, rather like Jesus himself. He was a bit of a mustard seed, born into poverty in a backwater on the edges of the Roman empire, yet in 30 years or so his influence was so invasive that it had

become in the interests of the Romans and for the Jewish authorities for him to die. And his followers were a bit like mustard seeds like, a right ragtag and bobtail collection of misfits.

I mentioned scarecrows earlier, but Jesus isn't a scarecrow gardener, no he's a gardener offering nourishment to welcome, perhaps especially the unwelcome. Ask Bruce/ Alastair and Carola how welcoming they would be to blackfly or some equally virulent pest.

Unlike us, God's kingdom/garden welcomes the unruly, the unwanted, all the things that our grand plans and efforts don't have room for. God's kingdom is about hospitality and not productivity.

What these parables seem to be telling us is that God's kingdom grows automatically on its own, regardless of our efforts or good intentions. That doesn't give us a free pass to do nothing, but equally it means we shouldn't be discouraged when all our efforts to be good disciples and faithful disciples seem to be bearing little or no fruit.

And that is perhaps a good lesson for us, a reminder that things can come about perfectly well without any help from us. Our life is not about showing what we can do or the length of our to-do list. It's about trying to discern what we are called to do, not about rushing around deluding ourselves that things won't get done unless we do them. It's about doing what is ours to do and leaving the rest to God.

Rev Peter

Prayers

HELP US ALWAYS to remember that God's Kingdom is ultimately not dependent on our efforts even though we are called to use our God-given gifts and become the people God intends us to be. May we know when to act and when to be still, when to talk and when to listen, when to do and when to be.



We pray for the continuing success of the vaccination programme, that even though the number of infections may be rising the number of

hospitalisations and deaths will not, so that our lives can continue to return steadily to normal. We pray for those working in the travel industry as they deal with the reality of having their plans changed almost from day to day. We pray for students and children at school as they undergo end of year assessments and pray that the outcomes will be fairer than last year. We pray too that those countries in desperate need of vaccines, such as India and Nepal, will get sufficient supplies quickly. We pray for the success of G7 summit in Cornwall this week and for a better understanding between the UK and the EU over the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. We pray against violence and injustice wherever it occurs.

We pray for the Church worldwide in this Easter season especially those who are persecuted for their faith. For our Scottish Episcopal Church, for our College of Bishops, in particular Mark our Primus, John our Bishop, and for all who lead and guide us. We pray for Christine as she enjoys her well-deserved holiday with her family. May she return restored and renewed.

We pray for Rev Ruth Innes and those from our church families who have asked for our prayers.

From St Columba's: Katrina Barron, Rose MacLaren, Anne MacMillan, Brian Knotts, Howard Spencer, Lorna Aitken, Kath Stutt, Anthea & Katie McAlpin, Geoffrey Gerrard, Doug and Pat Laurie, Young Harry, Paul & Janice Moffat.

And from St Peter's: Anna Lovelock, Kathleen Rae (Anne's friend), Cisley Moss, Michael Patrick (Ruthie's friend), Peter McOwan, Harry and Connie Payne, Rita Manion (David's mother), Annie and Andy Gibbs (Olivia's in-laws), Joe Lavery, Bob Philip (John's father), Dot Pringle, Brenda Cook, Father John, Ruthie Cadell, David Szkudlarek, Jan Robson, Corinne Anderson and Jim O'Neil a friend of Lyn and John Aitken); and for all their families.

We pray for the souls of 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 at this time.

From St Columba's: Alice McMillan, Tom Fish and Margaret Smith.

From St Peter's: Ann Jones, Leslie Harding and Victor Nelson.

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.



Notices

DEAR FRIENDS, and so this lovely weather continues, drawing us out into our gardens, parks and communities. And what a joy it was to sing in church on Sunday, albeit behind our masks.

We still have to maintain our 2-metre distance and sanitise our hands but slowly we are reclaiming parts of our worship traditions! And because space is limited in St Peter's please book your seat – everyone is welcome to request a seat, whether a family group or otherwise, so book with Jane 843176 as soon as possible if you would like to attend a Sunday service.

Services for the coming week:

Third **Sunday** after Pentecost St Peter's @ 9.30am (Zoomed live)
St Columba's @ 11.15am.

Tuesday 15th June: St Peter's Reserved Sacrament Worship Eucharist @ 10.30am led by Ian Wallace.

Wednesday 16th June: St Columba's Eucharist @ 10.30.

I will be on holiday for the next couple of weeks, returning on Sunday 27th June for St Peter's Patronal Festival. Rev Peter (07747023108) and my two wardens (Jane, for the first week only 07982252666) and David (07901947345) will be looking after the day to day of church life.

The second of Rev Peter's Parables studies will be on Zoom this coming Friday (June 18th) at 3pm. All are welcome. The Meeting ID is 834 1022 6022 Passcode: 420408. The one-click link is in the weekly Zoom list.

The latest editions of The Communicant (the Edinburgh diocesan newsheet) are available now on the Diocesan website, via this link: <https://edinburgh.anglican.org/publications/the-communicant/>.

Nothing can stop the Provincial Youth Week! Glen 21 has now been confirmed for 1-7 August. It will be a 'blended' week of online interactivity, offline things to do and some in-person meet-ups in regional hubs around the Province. Places are filling up fast! Booking is still open, so if there are teenagers connected to your church who need something to look forward to this summer, direct them to Glen21.online for full information, FAQs and booking details. If you have any questions about Glen 21 please feel free to email Claire at YouthandChildren@dioceseofedinburgh.org. Claire Benton-Evans.

Rev Christine

Any contributions for the **Summer Edition of Life Together** to Peter Lewis (petethepod@gmail.com) by Sunday please.

SEC Morning, Evening and Night Prayer Liturgies

Morning, Evening and Night Prayer liturgies are available at www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/daily-offices

Rev Christine and Rev Peter will be saying Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer each day in their own homes and invite you to join in from yours.

On Thursday mornings at 9am they 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>

Meeting ID: 991 1810 8400 Passcode: 143983

For the coming week beginning on Pentecost 3 (Trinity 2). On Monday we celebrate Basil of Caesarea, 379; Gregory of Nazianzus, c.390; Gregory of Nyssa, 394, Bishops and Teachers of the Faith and on Friday we celebrate Bernard Mizeki, Martyr, 1896.

Sunday 13 th	1 Samuel 21:1-16	Romans 9:14-26	Luke 11:14-28
Monday 14 th	1 Samuel 1:1-20	Acts 1:1-14	Luke 20:9-19
Tuesday 15 th	1 Samuel 1:21 - 2:11	Acts 1:15-26	Luke 20:19-26
Wednesday 16 th	1 Samuel 2:12-26	Acts 2:1-21	Luke 20:27-40
Thursday 17 th	1 Samuel 2:27-36	Acts 2:22-36	Luke 20:41 - 21:4
Friday 18 th	1 Samuel 3:1-21	Acts 2:37-47	Luke 21:5-19
Saturday 19 th	1 Samuel 4:1b-11	Acts 4:32 - 5:11	Luke 21:20-28

The Collect for the week (Proper 11, Sunday between 12 and 18 June)

O Lord, you always guide your people whom you build up on the foundation of your love: make us ever stand in awe of your Holy Name, and love you in equal measure; 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 Woodfield – 07747023108

Rector's Wardens contact numbers:

David Graham Service – 07901947345
Jane Ramsay - 07982252666