



St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



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27th June 2021
St Peter

DEAR FRIENDS, as we celebrate St Peter's Patronal Festival, I hope these readings, prayers and reflections this Sunday make a connection with you and fill you with hope and encouragement.

Collect

ALmighty God, who inspired your apostle Peter to confess Jesus as Christ and Son of the living God: build up your Church upon this rock, that in unity and peace it may proclaim one truth and follow one Lord, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 12: 1-11

1 Peter 2: 19-25

Matthew 16: 13-19

Reflection

WELL, WHAT A RELIEF it is to find Peter getting it right for once. It's certainly a good reason for choosing this Gospel reading for St Peter's Patronal Festival given it's about the only thing Peter does get right in all the Gospels – apart from of course choosing to follow Jesus in the first place. The fact that Peter gets something right is actually by the by. It's the truth he is pointing to – that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, that matters. A truth that matters as much today as it did then, a truth reinforced by 2,000 years of experience and revelation. And that matters too, because our understanding of Messiah is so, so different from Peter's precisely because we have the advantage of hindsight.

Peter's response is a revelation from God, Jesus tells him, but it's clearly an incomplete revelation, because

three verses after the end of today's reading, Jesus says those still shocking words 'Get thee behind me, Satan' to Peter, after his impetuous disciple says you can't go to Jerusalem to die, that is not what being a Messiah is about. And in one sense, Peter's reaction to Jesus forecasting his impending death was not that surprising. Jewish expectations for their Messiah included the overthrow of their oppressors, currently the Romans so what better place for Jesus to confirm that he was the long-awaited Messiah than in Caesarea Philippi, a monument to Roman rule and authority, built by Philip the Tetrarch in honour of Caesar Augustus, the self-declared Son of God? So how on earth could Jesus die and be the Messiah?

Much of this passage is about identity – first and foremost Jesus's identity, but also the disciples' identity and our identity. Jesus starts off with the easy question to his disciples – who do they say that I am? In other words what are people saying about me? And the answers that come back probably don't surprise us that much. John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets. At least the crowds had partially tagged Jesus for who he was, even if, understandably, they hadn't grasped it in full. At the very least, he was the latest in the line of God's messengers sent to encourage or warn them, a rather scary figure in some ways rather than cuddly.

But then comes the killer question – Who do you say that I am? I suspect most of the disciples

would have been looking at the ground desperately trying to avoid catching Jesus' eye and being put on the spot. Luckily Peter can be relied upon to step into the breach even if normally he appears to engage his mouth before his brain. Perhaps the most astonishing thing about Peter's A* answer is that it was 100% right even though the



assumptions behind it were 180 degrees out! The question Jesus posed is probably the most important question He asked in his earthly lifetime and continues to ask today. Because what it asked the disciples in effect was – Why are you following me, why have you given everything up? And it asks us – Why DO we follow a Galilean carpenter who lived 2,000 years ago, who do WE say Jesus is? There are all sorts of ways of answering that question – but who do YOU say that I am? It's a question we all should ask ourselves regularly, because the answer isn't necessarily always going to be the same, it may change according to circumstances.

It wouldn't be right to say we should all ask ourselves that question and then duck it myself, but it's not easy to put it into words. To me Jesus is God's way of saying how precious each one of us is to Him. To me Jesus is God's way of saying if you find it hard to grasp what I am like then look at Jesus. To me Jesus is God's way saying that He wants to be in relationship with me. To me Jesus is God's way of saying you may not think you're up to much, but I do. To me Jesus is God's way of saying that He is much more interested in what we can be than what we have been or what we are. Above all to me Jesus is God's way of saying that ultimately love will win. That's just my take on it, you will all answer the question differently. I hope you will take the time to try to answer it in your own way in your own time – and bear in mind that there are so many associated questions that may spring to mind, for instance about our own inherited assumptions about Jesus that we cling to because it's safe to do.

Ultimately – is Jesus THE Messiah or YOUR Messiah?

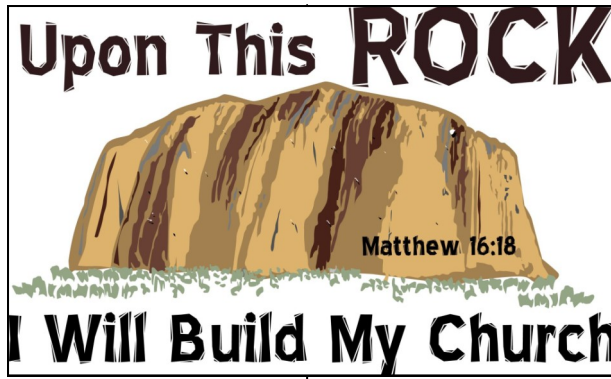
Rev Peter

Prayers

WE GIVE YOU THANKS AND PRAISE Lord Jesus that St Peter's proclamation that You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, is the rock on which Your Holy Church is founded



We pray for all those affected by COVID, especially for pupils, students and their families as the summer holidays approach, that they would be able to get a proper break without any disruption. We pray for all those affected by the delays in re-opening certain sectors of business, particularly travel and hospitality, and that they can finally get back to some form of normality. We give thanks for the continued rollout of the vaccination programme so that the link between infection and serious illness is finally broken, allowing our freedoms to be restored. We continue to pray against poverty, violence and injustice wherever it occurs, and pray



for our leaders to have wisdom as they seek to govern for the benefit of all the people.

We pray for the Church worldwide 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 give thanks for Christine as she returns from her well-deserved holiday. May she return restored and renewed in Your Spirit.

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, 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 (Andy'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: Alexander Currie and James Irvine.

From St Peter's: Lilian Williamson, Jean Stewart, Alfred Taylor and Kathleen Brooker.

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 we move further into summer and the school holidays approach at increasing speed. As we get used to singing (shortened) hymns again, we wonder what will be the next part of our traditional Sundays we will be free to enjoy again – whatever it is, it now looks likely that it will be pushed back a few weeks so we must continue to show patience 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:

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost St Peter's Patronal Festival
St Peter's @ 9.30am (Zoomed live), St Columba's @ 11.15am.
Tuesday 29th June: St Peter's Eucharist @ 10.30am.
Wednesday 30th June: St Columba's Eucharist @ 10.30

Rev Christine will be returning from holiday on Sunday 27th June in time to celebrate St Peter's Patronal Festival. Rev Peter (07747023108) and David Graham-Service (07901947345) will be looking after the day to day of church life until then. Please let us know of any urgent pastoral issues.

Due to other commitments, the fourth and final Parables study led by Rev Peter will be held over until Friday July 16 at 3pm.

The latest edition of The Communicant (the Edinburgh diocesan newssheet) is 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 Peter

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=ZXpMWndaY210empVY1daL09paGJwZz09>

Meeting ID: 991 1810 8400 Passcode: 143983

For the coming week beginning on Pentecost 5 (Trinity 4). On Monday we celebrate Irenaeus of Lyons, Bishop and Teacher of the Faith, c.202, on Tuesday we celebrate Peter, Apostle (or Peter and Paul, Apostles), on Wednesday we celebrate Alexander Jolly, Bishop, 1838 on Thursday we celebrate The Birth of John the Baptist, on Friday we celebrate Moluag of Lismore, Bishop, 592, on Thursday we celebrate Serf, Bishop, c.500 and on Saturday we celebrate Thomas, Apostle.

Sunday 27 th	Week B	1 Samuel 28:3-19	Romans 13:1-10	Luke 17:20-37
Monday 28 th	Week B	1 Samuel 10:17-27	Acts 7:44 - 8:1a	Luke 22:52-62
Tuesday 29 th	Week B	1 Samuel 11:1-15	Acts 8:1-13	Luke 22:63-71
Wednesday 30 th	Week B	1 Samuel 12:1-6, 16-25	Acts 8:14-25	Luke 23:1-12
Thursday 1 st	Week B	1 Samuel 13:5-18	Acts 8:26-40	Luke 23:13-25
Friday 2 nd	Week B	1 Samuel 13:19 - 14:15	Acts 9:1-9	Luke 23:26-31
Saturday 3 rd	Week B	1 Samuel 14:16-30	Acts 9:10-19a	Luke 23:32-43

The Collect for the week Proper 13 Sunday between 26 June and 2 July (Except Tuesday and Saturday)

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing can be whole and nothing can be holy: increase your mercy towards us, that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so enjoy the good

things of time, as not to lose the things of eternity; 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 Tuesday: Peter and Paul, apostles

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, glorified you in their death as in their life: grant that your Church, instructed by their teaching and example, and knit together in unity by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ, our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

or when Peter is celebrated alone

Almighty God, who inspired your apostle Saint Peter to confess Jesus as Christ and Son of the living God: build up your Church upon this rock, that in unity and peace it may proclaim one truth and follow one Lord, your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

The Collect for Saturday: Thomas, apostle

Almighty and everliving God, who strengthened your apostle Thomas with faith in the resurrection of your Son: grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God; 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:

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Rector's Wardens contact numbers:

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