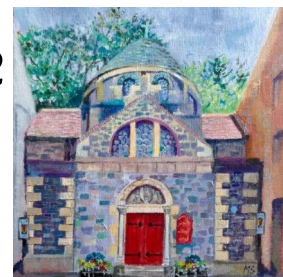




# St Columba's Bathgate and St Peter's Linlithgow



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18<sup>th</sup> July 2021  
Pentcost 8

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

### Collect

**O** GOD OF POWER AND MIGHT, all good things belong to you: sow in our hearts the love of your name, and make us grow in the life of faith; nurture the things that are good, and tend them with your loving care; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

### Readings

Jeremiah: 23: 1-6  
Ephesians 2: 11-22  
Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56

### Reflection

**I**T'S A SIGN OF THE TIMES, isn't it, when even small villages like West Linton have special charging points for electric cars. They are pretty commonplace at motorway service stations and no doubt Linlithgow/Bathgate has them too. And they're great if you want to recharge your battery quite quickly and hurry on to your destination. On the other hand, you can recharge the battery overnight at home via 3-pin plug. But you'll have to be patient as trickle charging can take 12 hours or more, so don't be in a rush to go anywhere soon.

And that's the problem the disciples had. They came back from their mission, breathless, excited, itching to tell Jesus about all the demons they had exorcised and healings they had done. They were basically looking for a Formula 1 type pitstop, lasting seconds before heading out again for more adventures.

And Jesus said no, what you need is a trickle charge, so we're going to go away for a rest.

That reminds us of the realities of human life, doesn't it? Realities that affected Jesus as much as they do us. The Gospels are littered with examples of Jesus getting tired and hungry, needing time on his own to pray, needed privacy from the crowds. His ministry was short, but he was rarely in a hurry. Did he ever travel at more than 5mph in his life? Possibly with a following wind on the Sea of Galilee, but that would have been about it.

This week's Gospel reading is a slightly 'bits and pieces' one, if I can put it that way. The two passages bookend the feeding of the 5,000 and the first part follows straight on from the beheading of John the Baptist. So Jesus is probably not in a good place. And, of course, the disciples would have been well aware of how Jesus must have been feeling. Arabic translations say the disciples gathered together rather than returned.

In a way it is reminiscent of those pictures of the England football players gathering round their young teammates heartbroken at missing those penalties that cost England victory. Perhaps those scenes are a metaphor what Jesus wanted to explain to his disciples. It's not accomplishments, wonderful as they are, that matter, it's relationship that counts. explains why he wants to take the disciples away for a rest and privacy and more teaching – perhaps about the risks that following him entails

Off they headed in the boat to a deserted place, but clearly they must have been nearly becalmed because the crowds get there ahead of them. And it's here – and in the second part of the reading that we see Jesus' problem. That when it comes to choosing between rest and compassion, Jesus invariably chooses compassion. They were like sheep without a



shepherd, Mark says.

How reminiscent of our Old Testament reading this morning in Jeremiah, where the prophet rails against the failure of Israel's shepherds, ie the religious leaders of the day, to look after their sheep properly. He prophesies that God himself will gather the remnants of his flock and then raise up shepherds, who will act as true shepherds.

And in the last few verses too, Jesus makes a second attempt to get the rest he and the disciples need – and fails a second time because people hear he is in the neighbourhood and come hurrying to find him to bring the sick for healing and we read that all who managed to touch the fringe of his cloak were healed. Those healings will have brought new life to many, because Jesus heals emotionally and spiritually as well as physically.

And of course we are celebrating new life this Sunday with the baptism of Caleb at St Columba's. It is always a moment for great rejoicing – both here and in heaven – when someone becomes part of the body of Christ. In Caleb's case it is at the behest of Shaun and Danielle, but it is up to all of us to nurture Caleb in his Christian walk and not leave it all to his parents and godparents. After all, bringing up a child is exhausting and even young parents need to 'come away and rest' at times, just as much as those of us who are somewhat longer in the tooth.

The reality is that just as sheep die without a shepherd, so faith dies when it is not nurtured. That is part of our calling as Christians, just as it is part of our calling to show compassion. Yet, as Jesus shows all too clearly in our Gospel reading, there is inevitably a tension between compassion and self-care. When push came to shove Jesus always chose compassion.

Our ability to show compassion grows and shrinks to the extent that we keep returning to Jesus, the wellspring of our compassion, and rest in his strength. Just as the disciples needed reminding that anything they achieved was only through God's grace, so it is God's glory we are seeking, not our own.

*Rev Peter*

#### Prayers

**W**E GIVE THANKS AND PRAISE for Caleb's baptism this Sunday and pray that as he grows up he will always know You and that You will be the rock on which he stands



We give thanks that the relaxation in the rules will allow more people to come into our two churches from this coming Monday. At the same time, we pray for all those still affected by COVID, especially for those who feel anxious about the changes. We give thanks that most sectors of business, particularly travel

and hospitality, 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. Help us to accept with good grace the continued restrictions on our lives. We continue to pray against poverty, violence and injustice wherever it occurs, thinking especially of South Africa and Myanmar at this time. We 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, who is on a short sabbatical, and for all who lead and guide us.

We pray for Rev Ruth Innes and those from our church families who have asked for our prayers, especially remembering Joe Lavery, who died overnight on Wednesday. He was a well-known figure in Linlithgow, who had been in our prayers for some time. We also pray for David Olwa, whose aunt, Evelyn Elay, died last Saturday (July 10)

**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), 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. General Synod formally recognised Jane Haining, who died in the Auschwitz concentration camp, as a person of faith at its recent meeting and asked us to remember her this coming Sunday.

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:** Robert Ure, Owen Croft and Tom Frew.

**From St Peter's:** Joe Lavery, Annie Taylor, Mary Hutton, Bert Brodie and Gerry Lawless.

### Blessing

**T**HE 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

**D**EAR FRIENDS, well this lovely summer weather is so welcome, isn't it? Especially when we are catching up with friends, enjoying an outside coffee or perhaps even a glass of wine!

This morning we received some good news from the Bishop's Advisory Group - from Monday 19th July social distancing measures in churches will reduce from 2m to 1m which will allow more people to attend our services. Booking will still be required on Sundays for St Peter's though, whether for one seat or a family group, so please do continue to contact Jane on 843176.

Sadly, Rev Peter's time with us is drawing to a close and next Sunday, 25th July, will be his last one with us, Peter will be Presiding at both services. For those who aren't able to come to church to wish him farewell the service will, as usual, be zoomed live, the Zoom code will be in the weekly list.

### Services for the coming week:

**Sunday 18th** - 8th Sunday after Pentecost: St Peter's @ 9.30am and St Columba's @ 11.15. Baby Caleb will be baptised during the service at St Columba's

**Tuesday 20th** - St Peter's midweek Eucharist @ 10.30am.

**Wednesday 21st** - St Columba's midweek Eucharist.

The latest edition of 'The Communicant' (the Edinburgh diocesan news sheet) is available now on the Diocesan website, via this link: <https://edinburgh.anglican.org/publications/thecommunicant/>

Pastoral Visiting: If you would like me to come and visit, or if you know of someone who would appreciate a visit please do let me know. And please be assured that Rev Peter and I hold you all in our prayers each day.



Amazon has changed its donation setting to Smile Amazon. Please remember, when you use Amazon to order goods, it's easy to change to Smile Amazon, which gives 0.5% to your chosen charity. St Columba's has registered. Go to your search bar in the app and type in smile

amazon. The easy to follow guide will help you change your account setting to the Smile version. That way we can increase our donations. Thank you.

### SEC Morning, Evening and Night Prayer Liturgies

Morning, Evening and Night Prayer 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 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 8 (Trinity 7). On Wednesday we celebrate William Wilberforce, 1833 and on Thursday we celebrate Mary Magdalene.

Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Week A	1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:16-28	Acts 4:1-15	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Week A	1 Samuel 24:1-22	Acts 13:44-52	Mark 4:1-20
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Week A	1 Samuel 25:1-22	Acts 14:1-18	Mark 4:21-34
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Week A	1 Samuel 25:23-44	Acts 14:19-28	Mark 4:35-41
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Week A	1 Samuel 28:3-20	Acts 15:1-11	Mark 5:1-20
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Week A	1 Samuel 31:1-13	Acts 15:12-21	Mark 5:21-43
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Week A	2 Samuel 1:1-16	Acts 15:22-35	Mark 6:1-13

**The Collect for the week Proper 16 Sunday between 17 and 23 July (Except Thursday)**

O God of power and might, all good things belong to you: sow in our hearts the love of your name, and make us grow in the life of faith; nurture the things that are good, and tend them with your loving care; 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 Thursday Mary Magdalene**

Almighty God, whose Son restored Mary Magdalene to wholeness of body, mind and spirit, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: forgive us, heal us, and strengthen us by your grace, that we may serve you in the power of his risen life; 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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Rev Peter Woodfield – 07747023108

**Rector's Wardens contact numbers:**

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Jane Ramsay - 07982252666