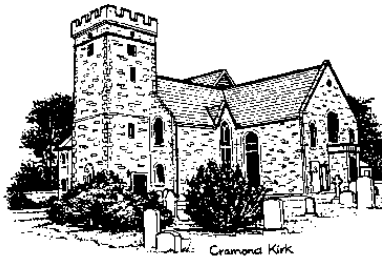


CRAMOND KIRK



JANUARY PRAYER DIARY

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge him,
And he will make your paths straight.

(Proverbs 3 : 5 & 6)

* * * * *

Topics are arranged over 7 days which you may find helpful.

Sunday

Pray for Tom & Colin & for their pastoral role in the life of the congregation & also for their work in the community. Pray for Louise as she begins her time of ministry at St Nicholas' Church, Lanark. The induction takes place on 12th January. Pray for Russell & Margaret as they continue with their many public engagements.

Monday

Alistair Hair retires as organist & choirmaster on 15th January. We give thanks for his time with us & for the ministry of the choir under his leadership. We also pray for his successor, Simon Bertram, who will take over from 16th January.

Tuesday

Pray for families & friends of those affected by recent terror attacks in Berlin & Istanbul. Pray for the recently bereaved of our own community.

Wednesday *(from the Christian Aid website)*

Pray for all those who live with the legacy of the earthquake in Haiti & who marked the seventh anniversary on 12th January. Pray for all those rebuilding their lives after Hurricane Matthew swept through Haiti in October 2016. Pray for our partner KORAL in Haiti, helping people prepare for hurricanes & providing a safe place & essential supplies when they strike.

Thursday *(from the Church of Scotland website)*

Government promotes the work of Social Enterprises with a meeting at the premises of the Grassmarket Project. One of those social enterprises is the Grassmarket Project..., which grew out of outreach work by Greyfriars Kirk. “Social enterprises trade for the common good. They address social needs, strengthen communities, improve people's life chances or protect the environment.” Created as a separate social enterprise by Greyfriars & the Grassmarket Mission in 2010, the project runs a successful café, a carpentry workshop which uses recycled wood & has its own tartan, which it turns into scarves, purses, hats, bags & more.

Equally important is that through these commercial activities it helps vulnerable people develop skills & break out of cycles of homelessness & unemployment by offering work experience, education, training & support in a nurturing environment. Pray for the success of this ministry.

Friday *(from Churches Together website)*

“The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January... During this year, the work of Martin Luther & other reformers is being commemorated by many Christians. The Reformation changed much in the life of the Western Church. Christians of all traditions showed heroic witness & were renewed in their Christian lives. Scripture tells us we can be frozen to the spot when we look back. It is important not to be limited by what happened in the past. The Holy Spirit can open us to a new future in which division is overcome & God's people made whole.” Pray with others for unity in Christ's church.

Saturday *(from Christian Aid website)*

Christian Aid is deeply concerned about escalating humanitarian needs, mass displacement & continuing violence across South Sudan. Please pray with us that humanitarian assistance will reach those most in need & for long-term reconciliation work to resolve the complex political & ethnic divisions at the heart of the conflict.

REFLECTION

In devotional terms, ... following the seasons of the Church year can leave us with this feeling that things never happen at the right time. The realities of life rarely match up with the mood of the Church year; they always come too early or too late. If, as we travel through Lent or Advent, life is delivering abundant joys & happiness, the sombre tone of the season never quite hits home. But it's even harder to deal with if you are feeling down or low when Christmas or Easter arrives ...

All too often we have this dislocated feeling of being out of time, out of step & Christmas is a particularly difficult season to negotiate if you don't feel like celebrating. It's not only the Church but the whole culture that feeds us an exaggerated image of happiness & celebration, which sets us up to feel very low if we are not in the party mood. Most of our life is lived in this in-between place, where things come early or late, but never on time....

When I was a child we had a maiden Aunt, a remarkable & wonderful woman, who always, absolutely dependably, forgot all our birthdays. But at some random time of year – May or July or November – a big parcel would arrive full of presents. They might say “Happy Birthday” or “Happy Christmas” regardless of the time of year. It seemed madly exciting to us to get a completely unexpected present just when life was going through a tedious moment. It was always books (she taught English literature & was

bang up to date on all the latest releases) & they were always wonderful. The same aunt, when we went to stay, would sneak into our bedroom just before sunrise, pull jumpers over our pyjamas & put our bare feet into shoes with *no socks* (against Mum's rules!) & quietly exit the house with us, leaving everyone else asleep. Then she would pile my sister & me into her very old Austin & drive us down to the beach. This was in Somerset, where the beach goes out for about 2 miles at low tide. There she would drive out across the sand – again, strictly against the rules, but there is no one there at sunrise to make you obey the rules – & out of the car would appear a Primus stove, an omelette pan, eggs, butter, salt, pepper & fresh bread. We ate omelettes & drank tea as the sun rose over the sea & then went paddling in our pyjamas, breathing in great gulps of early morning salty air. The woman was a genius & we adored her...

Whenever God's gifts elude me – when there is no joy at Easter, no wonder at Christmas, or simply no sense of God's presence in between times – again I think of Auntie Margaret. The gift will arrive at the right moment, even if not on the 'right' date. Joy on demand is joyless indeed but omelettes on the beach & presents in July I can seriously live with.

(Professor Maggi Dawn, Yale University. <https://maggidawn.net/>)

If you have a prayer request or a favourite prayer which you would care to share in a future Prayer Diary, please e-mail : cramond.kirk@blueyonder.co.uk