

CRAMOND KIRK



NOVEMBER PRAYER DIARY

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

(Matthew 5 : 3 - 6)

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

Sunday

Pray for Russell & Colin & their ministry in teaching & in pastoral activities. Pray for the staff working from 121 George Street that they might be encouraged in their ministry to the Kirk.

Monday

During this month of Remembrance, pray for members of the armed forces who are deployed on behalf of the country, some in hostile environments & others in humanitarian & peacekeeping roles. Pray also for Chaplains who minister to them. Pray for the work of Erskine in their care for injured & unwell veterans.

Tuesday

Pray for the families and friends of those killed in the terrorist incident in New York on 31st October. Pray for those injured in the attack that they might make a good recovery.

Wednesday *(from the Christian Aid Website)*

2 November marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the letter written by the British Government supporting the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. Pray for Christian Aid partners working for peace & justice in Israel & the occupied Palestinian territory. Pray in particular for the women in the occupied Palestinian

territory. Pray for their freedom from the limitations placed on them, their rights, education, opportunities to earn money, political participation & decision making. Pray for Christian Aid partner YWCA as they support women to create & sell dolls wearing traditional Palestinian dress. Give thanks for this project which helps women living in refugee camps to earn money.

Thursday

Pray for Martha Steven, daughter of Neil & Nicola Steven, baptised on 29th October. Pray for the recently bereaved of our own community. Pray for Jack Rorke & Norman Stocks in thanks for the 50 years' service that they have each given to Cramond Kirk.

Friday

Pray for the ministry of Operation Christmas Child as the shoeboxes are collected & distributed. Since 1990 more than 146 million children in over 150 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child.

Saturday *(from the Church of Scotland website)*

“Together We Pray” is a national prayer initiative, running from September 2017 to May 2018, calling the Church to join together in prayer. This year the General Assembly asked the Church to focus on prayer & particularly to pray as the Church thinks about its priorities for the future. The call to prayer grew out of last year's On the Road initiative when meetings were held around the country to listen to the hopes & concerns of church members & to explore solutions to the challenges of ministry & discipleship in the 21st century. Throughout the year we will support your efforts through prayer resources (that will be available online over the course of the initiative) & highlighting opportunities to pray for the future work of the Church. In particular, there will be a **National Day of Prayer on 25 November** in which we hope you will want to be involved. Our hope is that through Together We Pray, people will join together bringing all of life before God in prayer & imagine the future for the Church of Scotland & our communities.” You may wish to use the Saturdays in November to pray for the future of the Church of Scotland.

REFLECTION

What does it mean to be happy? This question is central to individuals yearning for fulfilment. For centuries it has also been a key question in philosophical debates about the meaning of human life. Ancient Greek philosophers debated how humans could align their own will with the created order in order to be happy or blessed, *makarios*. The Greek word, *makarios*, which is central to the Beatitudes, is a fairly common word. It's not really hard to understand but it's difficult to translate into English. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translates “blessed,” which is by far the most common translation of the Beatitudes. The problem with blessed is that it sounds a little unreal, like a quality that applies only to those saints whose stories we celebrate on All Saints Day & whose example may appear a bit unattainable to us. New Testament professor Margaret Aymer has translated *makarios* as “greatly honoured.”

This is another good option for translating this word because it emphasises the theme of reversal that is implied in the Beatitudes. The meek & the merciful are not revered by the world's standards, but they are honoured by God & by those who would align their lives with God's ways.

But there is another option for translating *makarios* that we may consider: happy. Jesus says: Happy are the poor in spirit. Happy are the merciful. Happy are the pure in heart. “Happy” is not a perfect translation because in our culture it can convey a thin, happy-

go-lucky kind of happy. This is not what ancient philosophers meant, for they were well aware of the suffering & conflict humans experience. It cannot be what Jesus means either or he would not call those who mourn “happy.” He is describing a deeper happiness, the kind of happiness that only comes from aligning one’s own will with God’s.

When this same word is used in the Old Testament, that’s exactly how we translate it: “happy.” Consider Psalm 1: “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord & on God’s law they meditate day and night.” The psalmists declare “happy” those who delight in the law (Psalm 1:1), those who take refuge in God (Psalms 2:12; 34:8), those who observe justice & practice righteousness (Psalm 106:3).

Now, the psalmists are quite aware that the wicked pick on, persecute & scorn the righteous. So this “happiness” cannot be a simple feeling that things are going well, or that one is well-liked. These people are happy because they live their lives in a way that is oriented toward God’s loving-kindness. They see the world the way God sees it.

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(https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3453)

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