

CRAMOND KIRK



DECEMBER PRAYER DIARY

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared
in the sight of all nations:
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

(Luke 1 : 30 - 32)

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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 Colin as he steps down from the role of Associate Minister, being thankful for all he has contributed to the life & ministry of Cramond Kirk.

Monday

Pray for all the services to take place over this festive period, for Russell as he speaks & for a sense of the peace & joy of Christmas to be present amongst all the activity. Pray for Lara Gilmour, daughter of Patrick & Nicola Gilmour, baptised on 26 November.

Tuesday

Pray for the ministry to the homeless in Edinburgh over the winter. Pray for the success of the Cookers for Christmas Appeal on behalf of Fresh Start.

Wednesday *(from the Christian Aid website)*

Pray that Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal will help provide nutritious food for the people of South Sudan who have been displaced by conflict & are in urgent need. Give thanks for the UK Government's match funding for the appeal & pray that it will encourage even more people to donate generously at this time of giving gifts. Pray for church leaders in South Sudan as they work for peace after more than three years of devastating conflict.

Thursday

Pray for families helped by the Old Kirk & Muirhouse congregation as they receive toys from our Gift Service. Pray for the elderly & lonely of our community at this time of festivity & celebration. Pray also for those facing a first Christmas having lost a loved family member or friend during the past year.

Friday

(from the Church of Scotland website "Together We Pray" Prayer Diary)
http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/42940/Prayer_Diary.pdf

Listen to God: Take some time to reflect on how you spend your days. What are the responsibilities or tasks that you are involved in? Do you have a job? Are you retired? Are you a carer? Are you in education? Whatever your daily activity or routine, spend some time reflecting where you noticed God in your day.

Speak to God: Ask God to help you to be mindful of others as you go about your day & to have moments where you actively pray & pay special attention to where God is."

Saturday (from the Church of Scotland website)

Right Rev Dr Derek Browning said he was a strong supporter of the idea of "seeing the person, not the virus" as he prepares to mark World AIDS Day on Friday, 1 December. The annual event is dedicated to raising awareness of the pandemic & remembering the 36 million people who have died. Supporting the combat of HIV & AIDS is a priority for the Church of Scotland & congregation members have raised nearly £1.5 million to date. The Kirk's HIV Programme supports more than 20 projects in 16 countries around the world, including Scotland & works hard to tackle stigma & discrimination. In Scotland the Church's HIV Programme supports aspects of the work of Edinburgh-based Positive Help & Waverley Care, including its Voice of Hope Choir which performed at the Scottish Parliament last night. Also based in Edinburgh, Waverley Care's aim is to reach out to the wider community in Scotland to raise awareness of HIV & AIDS issues in an informal, creative & interactive manner. The Kirk's HIV Programme has its own Heart & Soul Swing Band which raises funds through their concerts. Pray for this ministry.

REFLECTION

It is rather a pity that Advent has come to be associated so much with preparing for Christmas, the first advent of Christ & we maybe pass all too quickly over what the Advent season is primarily about: that hope for the future that the coming of Christ at Christmas has given us, the hope for his second advent, when, as the Creed puts it, 'he will come again in glory.' It is, of course, a more difficult thing to think about, because it hasn't happened yet & we may have trouble supposing that it can happen but it's vital we think about it. Christians have always been characteristically people of hope – not just being hopeful for this or that to get better in the immediate future but hopeful for the ultimate future that God will give to his whole creation, a future in which all wrongs will be put right, when (in a lovely image the book of Revelation uses) 'God will wipe away every tear from every eye,' when transience & death shall be no more, because God will take his whole redeemed creation into the eternal livingness of his own life. In these sermons I'll be stressing two things about this Christian expectation of God's future for the world: that it is a hope for the whole of creation & that it is centred on Jesus Christ... When we think about the future, we're always telling stories, taking the story that has brought us to where we are now, the story so far, & trying as it were to read on into the future. As Christians we have a distinctive story. Our faith is about living within the Christian story of God & his creation, a story with a distinct future. It's the story the Bible tells. Of course the Bible tells lots of stories – stories about God's people Israel, stories about Jesus, stories about the early church but all these little stories belong within an overarching story: the Big story, the story about the meaning of everything, the story that begins with creation in the beginning & ends with new creation at the end. In between the story of Jesus in particular gives direction to this Big story, pointing it towards the Advent hope. The beginning of the story, the creation of the world, is necessarily told not in literal scientific terms but in picture & parable. Similarly the end of the story is not told in literal terms. We couldn't understand it if it were because it goes so far beyond anything in our experience. In the teaching of Jesus, in Paul's letters, in the book of Revelation we have the future & final goal of God's purposes for the world depicted for us in pictures & parables. They tell us more about its meaning than about how it will happen. The Bible talks about new creation. It's an idea that goes right back to Isaiah in the Old Testament. New creation doesn't mean that God is going to replace this world with a completely new one – out of nothing. It means that God will *renew* his creation, radically transforming it, transposing it as it were, into a new form of existence. When the Book of Revelation speaks of the new heaven & new earth, it also has God say, 'Behold I am making all things new.' Not 'I am making all new things' but 'I am making all things new.' Not replacement but renovation.

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<http://richardbauckham.co.uk/uploads/Sermons/Advent%20Hope%201.pdf>

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