

CRAMOND KIRK



APRIL PRAYER DIARY

“Don’t be alarmed,” (the young man) said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

(Mark 16 : 6 - 7)

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

Sunday

Pray for Russell & Tom & their ministry in teaching & pastoral activities. Pray that the teaching & support that they provide will give strength & encouragement to them & the congregation.

Monday *(from the Bethany Christian Trust Prayer Diary)*

Pray for our Connect to Community work where Bethany seeks to address homelessness at the prison gate. Pray for our staff & volunteers as they encourage individuals to grasp opportunities for change.

Tuesday *(from the CrossReach Prayer Diary)*

Pray for the Rankeillor Initiative, Edinburgh which provides temporary supported accommodation in shared flats in central Edinburgh. Support & advice is offered surrounding housing & welfare issues.

Wednesday *(from the Christian Aid Prayer Diary)*

On 4 April 2018, the world will mark the 50th anniversary of the death of the Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr. The world-renowned civil rights leader’s message of equality, social justice & peace still resonates with those campaigning for change around the globe.

Christian Aid's warm & mutually beneficial relationship with Dr King was based on a shared vision & values. He believed in 'speaking truth to power' & used non-violent direct action to face down those who denied human beings the right to flourish. This chimes with our commitment to challenge the systems & structures that oppress & to tackle violence & build peace.

Dr King was also eager to point out that his Christian faith was the driving force behind his commitment to fight for 'the last, the least & the lost' in society – much as our faith in Jesus is at the heart of our work to bring about real change in the world.

Pray that the ministry of Christian Aid will reflect these values.

Thursday

Pray for all involved with the Monday Café meeting in the Kirk Hall each month. Pray for the dementia sufferers & their carers that they might benefit from this ministry & also for all who give valuable time & advice to support this outreach.

Friday

Pray for the families & friends of those caught up in the shopping mall fire in Kemerovo in Siberia. Many children died in this disaster & there are still more unaccounted for.

Saturday

With one year to go to the exit of the UK from the EU there is still much uncertainty as to the final outcome. Pray for all involved in the negotiations that a satisfactory agreement might be reached.

REFLECTION

The ending of Mark's gospel is notoriously odd. While Jesus is mentioned & his promise is invoked, he does not even come by for a cameo.

Throughout the gospel Jesus has begged people to keep quiet about his activities but the more he urges them, the more they insist on announcing what he is up to. In the empty tomb, we finally hear a word sent by him that the followers are authorised to speak but this time they keep quiet. Add to all this the feeling that the story ends mid-sentence & you have plenty to process with the faithful & those who were asked to accompany them on this high holy day...

The story leaves many wanting more resolution but has the restraint not to give it away cheaply. If you want to experience the risen Jesus, you have to go back to Galilee where he promises to meet us. Going back to Galilee means going back to the margins where Jesus ministered & encountering him again feeding the hungry, driving out the demons that torment people, preaching words of hope to the broken-hearted, healing those in distress & breaking down the barrier walls that separate people. Entering into the power of God's coming kingdom, we experience the resurrected Jesus meeting & leading us into newness.

What does resurrection newness look like? Throughout the gospel there have been numerous clues. As a storyteller who has told this whole gospel, I cannot help but notice all the times that people are "raised" ... When the word is performed & combined with a gesture, it is all the more strikingly present.

Sown throughout Mark's gospel are stories that explain what baptismal resurrection looks like in daily life. Peter's mother-in-law is raised out of a fever & freed to serve (1:31). A man who is paralysed is restored to movement (2:9-12). Levi rises up to follow Jesus, leaving his tax booth behind ... A man marginalised by a withered hand is raised to the centre of his community's attention and is healed (3:3). God brings about growth as people go about the rhythms of sleeping & rising (4:27). Jesus rises in a storm to still the clattering chaos (4:38).

A young girl is awakened from a deadly slumber to new life (5:41). A boy threatened with fire & water by a demon is raised into freedom from torment (9:27). A blind beggar rises up to have Jesus restore his sight & follows Jesus on the way (10:49).

Clearly the resurrection does not wait until the end in Mark's gospel; it appears over & over again in Galilee as God's kingdom breaks in with its transforming power.

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https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3611

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.