

CRAMOND KIRK



JULY/AUGUST PRAYER DIARY

Now as for me, I said in my prosperity,
“I will never be moved.”

O LORD, by Your favour You have made my mountain to stand strong;
You hid Your face, I was dismayed.

(Psalm 30 : 6 & 7)

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Some topics for prayer over the summer :

Cramond Kirk

Pray for Russell, Margaret & Tom & their pastoral role over the summer months. Pray too for some time of relaxation for them as they take time out.

Continue to pray for the Year of Young people events & for the involvement of our young people in the life of the congregation. The National Youth Assembly 2018 takes place in Gartmore House, Stirlingshire from 17 - 20 August. Pray for the success of this event.

St Andrew's Church Jerusalem

From the Revd John McCulloch. We are requested to pray for the following:

For the witness of the church not just here in Israel/Palestine, but across the Middle East at a time when Christianity is being driven out. For wisdom for me, to know how to lead the church here & to know the things I should focus on & the things that I should not (it is so easy in this context to be pulled in many different directions & spread yourself too thinly). For my family, as they continue to settle in to life in the West Bank.

Zimbabwe *(from the World Mission Update of the Church of Scotland)*

A recent update from one partner church, the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA), in Zimbabwe included a request that we join them in praying for the following:

- The death of Presbytery Clerk Rev. Tinashe Chimvuni was a shock; please pray for the church in Zimbabwe during this sad time. Please continue to uphold Rev. Chimvuni's family in prayer.
- The Zimbabwean election date has been set for 30 July & there is still an air of uncertainty. This is a hugely significant election as it is the first in 38 years that Robert Mugabe has not been on the ballot. Please pray for a smooth election period, that protests will be peaceful & that leadership will be wise as they handle the whole process.

South Sudan *(from the World Mission Update)*

The South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) was unexpectedly requested to facilitate ongoing peace negotiations at the most recent meeting of the High Level Revitalisation Forum (HLRF) - a new peace initiative in South Sudan. There were representatives from all parties & stakeholders which were then chaired & co-chaired by Church leaders. While progress was slow & there were many challenges to be faced, the atmosphere was overall respectful. It was a landmark in the negotiations as this is the first time that the parties have met without a regional or international third party. The outcome of the discussions was a statement highlighting recommitment to the Cessation of Hostilities by all parties & stakeholders, an appreciation of the role the peace initiative & the Church & key compromises were signed by all parties & stakeholders. The Church was highly commended for the atmosphere it created & all parties & stakeholders have requested that Church-led dialogue be extended. Pray for the continuing success of this ministry.

Syrian Crisis *(from the Christian Aid Prayer Diary)*

Continue to pray for all those seeking refuge from the Syrian crisis. The summer months are often a time when people make perilous journeys. Pray for peace in Syria & for this enduring conflict to end. Pray especially for children who've barely known life outside of a refugee camp. Pray for all people seeking refuge across the world & for those who've been stuck for years in camps. Pray we may work together to loose the bonds of injustice.

Festival City

Pray for safety & security for the large number of visitors who will come to Edinburgh to experience the International Festival. Pray for the Street Pastors & organisations working with the homeless & the vulnerable during this busy time.

REFLECTION

Comments on Psalm 30

Psalm 30 inscribes holy space in two temporal dimensions. One dimension is the contested space of historical time lived in God's presence. We are drawn into the drama of the life of the believer with its doubts & joys, its anger & trust, its barely-suppressed fear of enemies. But another temporal dimension unfolds as well: the sacred space of eternity, in which God's favour continually heals believers & clothes them with joy. Mourning turns to dancing; sackcloth is traded for a garment of rejoicing. These are liturgical terms: we are led to perceive the "Temple," as both literal & spiritual edifice, holding together these two dimensions of faithful living.

It is not the case that we struggle & then are healed, once & for all. That might suggest that God's redemption is a commodity that believers could seek to manipulate liturgically. Rather, we seek God through the changeable rhythms of joyous praising & bitter wrestling. Faith is lived in a dance of mourning & rejoicing - a dance that is by turns brutal & lyrical, as the turbulent Hebrew meter of this poem might suggest. Belief means alternately challenging & submitting to One whose power to save cannot be bounded by our expectations.

In many Christian traditions, Psalm 30 is read at the Easter Vigil in all three lectionary years. The suggestion is an ancient one that this psalm speaks of God's mercy overcoming death itself. Augustine interpreted the psalm as singing "the joy of the resurrection" (see his *Exposition on the Psalms* at Psalm XXX). But this psalm resists any sort of triumphalist plot-line. God is not always experienced as loving & present.

And so we preach the good news of God's mercy while honouring the reality of the spiritual bleakness that even seasoned believers can experience. We acclaim God in times of joy & desolation alike, for we testify to an incarnate Lord who struggled with temptation in the desert & cried out his despair on the Cross.

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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.