

CRAMOND KIRK



OCTOBER PRAYER DIARY

You know the **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.'

(2 Corinthians 8 : 9)

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Topics are arranged over 7 days which you may find helpful

Sunday

Pray for Russell & Tom as they teach God's word to us, that they might hear God's voice as they prepare their sermons. Pray also for their ministry to local schools.

Monday

Pray for the people of Sulawesi in Indonesia affected by the recent earthquake & tsunami. Pray for the aid agencies as they attempt to help the locals rebuild their lives & provide necessary food & shelter on a day to day basis. The Church of Scotland have sent an emergency grant to our partner church, Gereja Kristen Sumba which itself has two sister churches on Sulawesi.

Tuesday

Pray for the Stewardship Team as they consider the responses from the recent receptions. Pray that they might gain a clear picture of how to advance the identified initiatives.

Wednesday

Pray for the work of Fresh Start & their mission to the homeless. Pray that the donations of food & cleaning items from the Harvest Thanksgiving service will make a difference to service users.

Thursday *(from the CrossReach Prayer Diary)*

Cunningham House in Edinburgh is a homeless hostel for 23 men & 3 women which also supports service users with drug & alcohol addictions as well as mental health issues. Pray for staff, residents & service users that they might experience God's blessing.

Friday *(from the Christian Aid Prayer Diary)*

Women gather in Malawi... to learn about starting up a village savings & small loans scheme as part of the Christian Aid led Enhancing Community Resilience Programme (ECRP). Pray for ECRP, that it will enable vulnerable households to move beyond survival to enjoy thriving & dignified lives. Praise God that ECRP has managed to reach 423,000 people across seven districts in Malawi so far, who are among the hardest hit by climate change.

Saturday *(from the World Mission Update of the Church of Scotland: United Mission to Nepal's Newsletter)*

Pray for people with disabilities in Nepal. They should have the same equal dignity & rights as other people but there are many situations where this is not the case. For example, often when babies are born with a disability they are seen as a curse & not given the extra love & care that they need. UMN is working with seven partners across Nepal to help erase the stigma that comes with people who have a disability. Please pray for the work, that we would help improve the lives of people living with disabilities & help improve the attitudes towards these people in wider society.

REFLECTION

Grace

Charis, grace, means basically 'giving' - not so much 'gift,' in the sense of the thing that is given, more 'giving,' in the sense of the act of giving. Paul uses it to mean God's act of generous self-giving to us that is the story of Jesus. Let me bring in now the other translations of 2 Corinthians 8 : 9. The one we heard read (REB) says this: 'You know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ: he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor...' That sounds right, doesn't it? Our Lord impoverished himself, gave away all his wealth to make us rich. That's generosity, isn't it? Yes, but the translation really doesn't quite do, because grace isn't a quality of God, an attitude, a disposition. It's what God does, it's his act of generous giving. So NRSV translates it in this way: 'you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor...' That's better. Grace is that act of giving for others.

Grace is not just God's attitude to us, nor is it, as people sometimes tend to think, some kind of stuff that God doles out to us. Grace is God being unimaginably generous in giving us himself in Jesus Christ - the impoverishment that becoming human has to mean for God, Jesus' life of utter self-giving for others, Jesus' giving up his life so that we may live. Grace is God's love in self-sacrificing action for us.

One way in which it makes an enormous difference to realise that grace is not just an attitude of God or a disposition but what God actually does, is that therefore God's grace is something effective & powerful & transformative. God did not become human & live & die for us in Jesus just in order to *show* us that he's rather fond of us. He did it to make a difference. In fact, after creation itself, God has never done anything that makes more of a difference to his world than the incarnation & the cross of Jesus.

God's grace, his giving of himself, is the greatest power there is to transform human life.

Professor Richard Bauckham, Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

(<http://richardbauckham.co.uk/uploads/Sermons/Grace.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.