

St. John's and St. Columba's Strathpray

Let us pray for one another and for the world ...

Sunday April 14th Third Sunday of Easter.

'See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children - think of it - and we really are! But since most people don't know God, naturally they don't understand that we are his children. Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, right now, and we can't even imagine what it is going to be like later on. But we do know this, that when he comes we will be like him, as a result of seeing him as he really is.' 1 John 3:1-2.



'There was from the Celtic Christians a Divine Immanence that helped them to transcend much that was dull routine and hard labour. They talked naturally to God as a man or a woman talks to a friend. They rejoiced in a closeness and were sure of His help. Through Him, a glory was theirs, a glory that made the world quite a different place, for they were never alone. Whether they needed guidance, a helping hand or a companion, they could turn to the Friend and say, "God."' (David Adam – The Cry Of The Deer)

Father, how marvellously generous you are to your children. The benefits you shower upon us every day are more than we can count and far more than we deserve. For all you give us make us truly grateful; and teach us in turn to be generous not only in our giving but also in our thinking and judging and in all our human relationships; for your goodness and mercy's sake. Amen.

We pray for the congregation of St. Columba, Nairn: Alison Simpson, Marion Keston, Blayne Peacock. Lay Reader: Pat Ellison.

Monday April 15th

For the next 4 days we have reflections on Moses and the burning bush from Eddie Askew's book: Unexpected Journeys.



'Moses led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.' Exodus 3:1.

'There must have been times when Moses felt abandoned, but the journey of the spirit always has to be made alone, and maybe it was the emptiness in his life that made Moses sensitive enough to recognise the presence of the

Lord in the burning bush. Desert experiences aren't pleasant but impatience gets us nowhere except deeper into frustration. The only thing we can do is wait, and pray through the darkness. God had his purpose for Moses as he has for us, and he makes it clear when he's good and ready, and not before.'

Christ, as a light, illumine and guide us. Christ, as a shield, overshadow and cover us. Christ be under us. Christ be over us. Christ be beside us, on left and on right. Christ be before us. Christ be behind us. Christ be within us. Christ be without us. Christ, as a light, illumine and guide us. Amen.

We pray for the almost 30,000 migrants who crossed the Channel in 2022 to seek asylum, and for those seeking to find humane strategies to deal with this.

Tuesday April 16th

‘There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.’ Exodus 3:2-3.



‘The mysterious bush focused Moses’ attention. People often describe deep spiritual experiences in terms of fire. This was his own Pentecost as the Spirit descended in tongues of flame and burned God’s purpose into his life. We tend to be more at ease with gentler images of God as father, lover, provider. Moses experienced his presence as flame, burning, purifying, at times frightening. Yet that flame was only a small indication of the power of God. A great volcanic outpouring of fire would have been too much. God measures out his revelation in terms of what we can

bear. Centuries later, 2 disciples whom Jesus befriended on the road to Emmaus felt a gentler heat, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road?” they asked.’

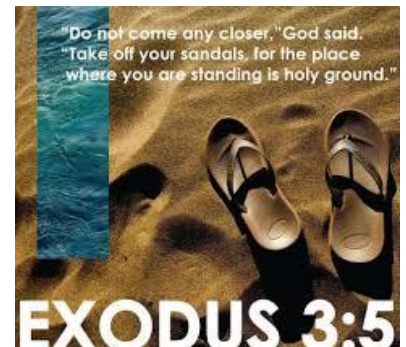
Lord, open my eyes to the wonder of your presence. It’s so easy to get mired in the ordinary. To walk, eyes down, horizons hemmed, vision restricted, and blinkered to the glory all around. Please help me, Lord, to feel the presence of your love, a spark that gathers into a flame. To see the bush burn bright, blaze into life, and in the momentary sear of heat, to hear your voice calling my name. and to find strength to live the little heroisms that daily life demands, to live your love in everything I do. Amen.

We pray for those who feel pressured, overworked and under-appreciated.

Wednesday April 17th

“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Exodus 3:5.

‘I have a problem with this concept of holy ground, the idea that some places are holier than others. It seems to me that holy ground isn’t a church, a shrine or a place of pilgrimage. There are places, ‘thin places’ as George Macleod called them, ‘with only a bit of tissue paper between things spiritual and things material’, where God’s presence is almost tangible. But it is His presence that is holy, not the place. For us the market and the workplace are as holy as the church, for that’s where God is with us. Our supermarket trolley may not glow incandescently but God’s there, calling us by name to acknowledge his closeness and to claim our lives.’



I am no Moses, Lord, but I still long to hear your voice and find my burning bush, bright-shining in the desert. Maybe the problem is that I talk too much and listen less. Your holy ground is all around me, your voice in those who ask for help. And maybe if I stilled my mind ... Amen.

We pray for those working to harness solar, wind, hydro, biomass and geothermal energy especially in the developing world and cities.

Thursday April 18th

“So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” and God said, “I will be with you.” Exodus 3:10-12.

'However close our encounter with God in burning bush, or quiet meeting, or in our daily living, He remains a mystery. A loving mystery rather than a threatening one. George Appleton, once a bishop in Jerusalem, wrote: I cannot grasp You, explain You, describe You – only cast myself into the depths of Your mystery. In an age when science provides us with so much information about the world we live in we assume we have a right to know everything, but God simply says, "Trust me." It worked for Moses even as it turned his life upside down. Life is always turned upside down when you trust God but many of us would say that faith really turns life back the right way up!' Who are You, Lord? I only know there's more to know than I can ever grasp. You are the breadth and length and depth of infinite love released into the world. Released into my life, Your nature seeded into mine, transforming, oh so slowly, what I am to what I'm meant to be. Your perfect love taking my imperfection and remoulding it, sometimes in pain, sometimes in joy. Help me to trust You more and question less. Amen. We pray for those in the emergency services responding to traumatic incidents.



Friday April 19th

***'We don't want this man to be our king.'* Luke 19:14.**

'It is the demands of the kingship of Christ that divide. People will come to Christ for what they can get from Him, but when He demands their allegiance they will turn their backs. Jesus had few converts but many enemies at the end of His ministry, because the rock-bottom issue the people eventually had to face was His kingship. You have to face that issue. And so do I. not just once, but continually.' (Charles W. Price – Christ For Real)

Come, Lord, and rule. Come into our hearts and fill them with love. Come into our minds and fill them with peace. Come into our lives, and fill them with light. Come into our days, and fill them with glory. Amen.

We pray for those who frame and administer our laws.

Saturday April 20th

***'What the eye has not seen nor the ear heard, God has prepared for those who love him.'* 1 Cor. 2:9.**

'God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another, I have my mission ... He has not created me for naught ... If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him ... If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about.' (Cardinal Newman)

Here I am, Lord – body, mind and soul. Grant that with your love, I may be big enough to reach the world and small enough to be at one with you. Amen.

We pray for our churches to make a difference in our local community.

