

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

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

I often feel that producing Strathpray (all 244 of them!) is like 'casting my bread upon the waters' ... and prayerfully leaving my wee offering to do its work as God wishes. However, I'd be happy for any feedback or suggestions as we come up to the 250th edition. Am I pitching it right? Or would you like something more 'meaty'? Should I broaden it out to give e.g. book recommendations? Or links to internet articles/talks? Or give a wider Christian world perspective? Or tackle a book in the Bible in more depth?

If I hear nothing I'll keep plodding along as usual! – I thoroughly enjoy producing Strathpray and am happy to continue as long as you want it.

You can contact me at jennifer.jones32@btinternet.com.

Sunday December 8th Second Sunday of Advent.

“Listen: I will send my messenger before me to prepare the way. And then the One you are looking for will come suddenly to his Temple - the Messenger of God's promises, to bring you great joy. Yes, he is surely coming,” says the Lord Almighty. “But who can live when he appears? Who can endure his coming? For he is like a blazing fire refining precious metal, and he can bleach the dirtiest garments! Like a refiner of silver he will sit and closely watch as the dross is burned away.” Malachi 3:1-3.

‘The Bible is full of the records of those who in their pride have tried to climb to the highest place. We read of Lucifer who sought to reach to the mount of God only to be cast down to hell. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Simon Magus and the Pharisee in the temple tell the same story. Paul tried to climb a ladder of merit and good works only to be brought down to the Cross. All who seek to exalt themselves through pride will be abased by God because there is only One who is worthy of the highest place and that is Jesus. All that exalts itself above Him will be brought down.’ (Stanley Voke – Reality)

Lord, prepare us for your coming in the world. Come, drive away despair from our politics; revive our dreams of justice; restore our passion for what is good, right and true. Establish your just and gentle rule in places like the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan, where peace has been powerless and violent people have had their day. Set a flame to the fuse of justice where arrogant people have defied the moral order year after year. Guard well the new springtime of hope where peace has come like a gift, wrapped in reconciliation and gladness. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

We pray for the congregations of Courthill Chapel, Kishorn; All Saints Mission, Kinlochewe: Don Grant.



Monday December 9th

‘For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.’ Psalm 139:13-14.

‘Your life didn't just happen. Long generations of evolution and growth have gone into the making of you. The pattern of your becoming was being shaped long before any of your known ancestors walked the earth. You have certain characteristics that are programmed

into your physical and mental being. You might like to reflect on what good gifts you feel you have inherited genetically from your forebears. And notice, without any judgement, any less desirable characteristics that have come along with the package. Then prayerfully give thanks to God.’ (Margaret Silf – At Sea With God)

[O God, You search Me and You Know Me By Bernadette Farrell](#)

Lord, you came to give us life, and life that was more abundant. Help me not to run away from life but to follow your Spirit, to accept the thorn as well as the flower, and to be grateful for the gift of life. Amen.

On International Anti-Corruption Day, we pray for all who suffer from corrupt practices.

Tuesday December 10th

‘In the past God spoke .. through the prophets at many times and in various ways.’

Hebrews 1:1.

‘Like the prophets of old, we too need to feel the outrageous injustice that exists within society today and how heavy a burden this is. Injustice ought to stir our hearts; the lack of peace in a world bristling with weapons should haunt us. Disunity exists not only among nations, but also in the midst of every nation. There are far too many unjust governments today. Advent is a time when we pray and await God’s intervention in the need of the present day, as he intervened then in Jesus’ birth. We long for God to rescue this unhappy, torn humanity that knows so little community. Now is the time to ask God for a radical change in all things.’ (Eberhard Arnold)

Into our world ... come, Lord Jesus.

Into the forgotten places, as into the stable ... come, Lord Jesus.

Into the lives of the poor, bringing hope;

Into the lives of the powerful, bringing caution;

Into the lives of the weary, bringing rest;

Into the lives of the wise, bringing restlessness;

And into our lives and longings,

Whatever our estate .. come, Lord Jesus.

This is the good news: Christ is coming, and blessed are those who wait on the Lord.

Therefore come quickly, Lord. Amen.

On Human Rights Day, we pray for those parts of the world where human rights are disregarded.



Wednesday December 11th

‘In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.’ Luke 1:26 – 29.

‘A sign saying “Do not disturb” is a familiar sight in most hotels. But the Advent message has three words for Christians: “Now, be disturbed.” This Advent let us make some time to examine our lives, preparing for the light of Christ and trusting, like Mary, that we only learn our calling by being disturbed. Advent is echoing Mary’s “Yes” to God. Let Jesus be born in you, and through God’s grace, allow your heart and mind to be renewed. Our decluttering and cleansing will mean that Christ’s light will not only comfort and enrich us

but also will shine through us, bringing light, hope and comfort to our world.’ (Martyn Percy – An Advent Manifesto)

Advent God, we journey with you, to Bethlehem’s stable and a new-born king, ears attuned to the song of angels, eyes alert for Bethlehem’s star. Forgive us if on our journey we are distracted by the tempting offers of this world. Keep our hearts aflame with the hope of Christmas and the promise of a Saviour. Amen.

How might the Holy Spirit seek to disturb us today? Can we sense the prompt and prod of God? Let us pray for an attentiveness to what and whom God seeks us to attend to.

We pray for those working to research and control emerging diseases.

Thursday December 12th

‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’ Matthew 3:3.

God looked round and saw the world which he had made a long time ago.

And what he saw upset him.

In one place preachers were talking about peace, priests were talking about peace, prophets were talking about peace. So much talking, but there was no peace.

There was only talking to hide the noises of war.

God sighed a heavy sigh.

In another place people were building: building banks and storehouses, building monuments to their own greed, building

meat mountains and butter mountains. So much building, while the poor became poorer and the scales of justice were biased to the rich.

God sighed a heavy sigh.

In another place people were doing their own thing: doing their own thing about loving, doing their own thing about trusting, doing their own thing about healing. So much doing their own thing, but the truth was that nothing was being done, for all were divided, suspicious and lonely.

God sighed a heavy sigh.

In another place people were worshipping: worshipping what their hands had made, worshipping what their money had bought, worshipping what their fantasies had imagined. So much worshipping, but no faith and no hope and no God.

God sighed a heavy sigh.

So the Word became flesh: tiny and frail flesh, nappy wet and girning flesh, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, the Son of Joseph and Mary. (Iona – Cloth For The Cradle)

O Lord God, who in your most holy power sustain the universe, be patient with us: do not be angry at our wicked deeds but take away our guilt; remember your compassion and mercy and in your goodness come to our aid. Through the grace and mercy of your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We pray for the work of Bible translators.



Friday December 13th

'If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins. If we claim we have not sinned, we are lying and calling God a liar, for he says we have sinned.' 1 John 1:8-10.

'The sinner's place is where we accept without excuse that we are sinners. This is the place David took as, when Nathan challenged him, he bowed his head saying: "I have sinned." Here Job stood and cried: "Behold, I am vile." And Isaiah said: "Woe is me! For I am undone." Here the publican prayed: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Here Peter fell at the feet of Jesus saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." In this place the prodigal son confessed: "Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy." Paul often knelt in the sinner's place and many a saint has watered it with his tears. If we have not come here we have not yet begun with God.' (Stanley Voke – Reality)

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, I have sinned against you and against my neighbour, in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through my own deliberate fault. I am truly sorry and repent of all my sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for me, forgive me all that is past and grant that I may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

We pray for countries in deep need where children die for want of clean water and food.

Saturday December 14th

'One word of command, one shout from the archangel, one blast from the trumpet of God and the Lord himself will come down from Heaven! Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then we who are still living on the earth will be swept up with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And after that we shall be with him for ever. So by all means use this message to encourage one another.' 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

Lord Jesus, fill me with awe this Advent as I contemplate again the mysteries in Your Word which assure us that You will return and that You want us to be ready. Amen.

We pray for those who drive on winter roads to make deliveries.



*'Behind the corridors of space,
Before the world began, beyond all understanding ... God.*

Fathering time,

Mothering creation,

Parenting all people ... God.

Waiting for the right moment,

Preparing the right way,

Intending the right woman ... God.

We believe in one God, Maker and Mover of heaven and earth. (Iona)