

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

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

### **Sunday August 24<sup>th</sup> Pentecost 11.**

***'Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.'* Psalm 23:4.**

*'David in Psalm 23 knew that the Lord was his shepherd and would always take care of his sheep, even in the valley of the shadow of death. However dark and desperate our circumstances may seem, God promises to go through them with us. As D.L. Moody said, "The valley of the shadow of death holds no darkness for the child of God. There must be light, else there could be no shadow. Jesus is the light. He has overcome death."' (Simon Guillebaud – Choose Life)*



Lord Jesus, thank you that you accompany me in every situation. Give me confidence today to walk with you. Amen.

We pray for the congregations of St. Mary the Virgin, Ullapool; St. Gilbert's Kinlochbervie; St. Gilbert's Lochinver; St. Boniface Achiltibuie: Clare Caley, David Higgon. John Green.

### **Monday August 25<sup>th</sup> Bartholomew, Apostle.**

*'While praying with clay in my hands, I understood a little more of how God might have felt about this world he had created.*

*I was praying with my prayer group in my home. We had each been given a lump of clay which we worked while one of the group read verses of Scripture comparing our lives to lumps of clay in the heavenly potter's hands: **"We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."** (Isaiah 64:8) **"Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand."** (Jeremiah 18:6)*

*I was astonished to discover how quickly the crude, cold lump was warmed by the heat of my hands, how malleable it became and how I longed to make it something beautiful. I pummelled it and rolled it, squeezed it and moulded it until, at last, I created a small dish with a scalloped edge. By that time it belonged to me, even though it had an identity all its own. I held it in reverence. And when someone suggested that we might end the evening by placing the object we had made back into the sack of raw clay, a wave of protest swept over me. The object was special to me*



*because I had created it.*

*Others in the group confessed to similar feelings of attachment for the objects they had made. It underlined just how precious to God each of us is; how precious, too, is each particle of his creation.' (Joyce Huggett – The Smile Of God)*

Lord Jesus Christ, no matter where we are, far away or near at hand, off involved in the hurly-burly of life, immersed in human cares or joys, light-hearted or down in the dumps, give us ears that hear, eyes that see, wills to obey, hearts that love; then declare what you want, reveal what you want, command what you want, change what you want! Amen.

We pray for those in crisis situations needing immediate help.

## **Tuesday August 26<sup>th</sup>**

***'Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me.' Matthew 25:40.***

*'A little street urchin was standing barefoot in front of a shoe shop, peering through the window, and shivering with cold. A lady approached him and said, "Little man, what are you looking at?" "I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes," was the boy's reply. She took him by the hand into the store and asked the clerk to get some socks for the boy, she then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. She then took the little guy to the back part of the store, removed her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with a towel. By this time the clerk returned with the socks.*



*Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she bought him a pair of shoes. She patted him on the head and said, "No doubt, my little fellow, you feel more comfortable now?" As she turned to go, the astonished boy caught her by the hand and, looking up into her face, said, "Are you God's wife?"*

*It's a simple illustration but a profound concept. Will you and I embody the message we profess to believe today?' (Simon Guillebaud)*

*Lord help me to see Jesus in everyone and be Jesus to everyone today. Amen.*

*We pray for those who are dying alone.*

## **Wednesday August 27<sup>th</sup>**

***'My friends, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure. Make sure that your endurance carries you all the way without failing, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.' James 1:2-4.***

*'One of the church's most popular old hymns is "Now thank we all our God." It was written by Martine Rinkart in the early 1600s. he was a Lutheran pastor in the town of Eilenburg in Saxony during Germany's Thirty Years War. Eilenburg was a walled city, so it became a haven for refugees seeking safety from the fighting. Tragically, with overcrowding and food scarcity, a plague and famine decimated those gathered, such that Eileburg became a giant morgue. In one year alone, Pastor*

***Now thank we all our God  
With hearts and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom his world rejoices;  
Who from our mother's arms  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.***

*Rinkart conducted funerals for 4,500 people, including that of his own wife. The war dragged on and on. Yet through it all, he never lost courage or faith, and it was during the darkest days of Eilenburg's agony that he was able to write this hymn:*

*"Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom the world rejoices .... Keep us in his grace and guide us when perplexed, and free us from all ills, in this world and the next."*

*Remarkable! Rinkart kept focussed on God's promises of heaven even while going through a living hell. He kept lifting his sights to a higher plane although buried deep in destruction. He was able to cling to hope in the pits of despair. So can we try to do the same?'*

*Lord, I choose to embrace the path to maturity and completion, however painful. Fill me with joy, hope, and the ability to persevere today through all circumstances, for your glory. We pray for those who are anxious about many things; those for whom even little worries loom large.*

## **Thursday August 28<sup>th</sup>**

***'Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal.'***  
**Proverbs 12:18.**

*'Towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the Allies were bombing Berlin. Heavy and cumbersome bombers would be accompanied by smaller more agile fighter planes to protect them from enemy fire. One night a number of fighter planes were flying on their way home, separated from the bomber, when, out of nowhere, a German plane appeared and attacked the bomber. Bullets flew all around them, and 5 pierced the plane, including the fuel tank. The pilot waited for an explosion and imminent death, but neither came. He duly made it back safely across the Channel.*

*A few hours later a mechanic knocked on the pilot's door and presented 5 crumpled but unexploded bullets to him – and to his amazement he discovered that all the bullets were empty of gunpowder, and in one was a folded note: "We are Polish POWs. We are forced to make bullets in factory. When guards do not look we do not fill with powder. Is not much but is best we can do. Please tell family we are alive." The scribbled note was signed by 4 Polish prisoners-of-war. Out of millions of bullets, those few made the difference and saved the lives of the pilot and crew.*

*We're constantly firing off rounds at people, in terms of what we say, how we act, our general attitudes. And they can either be live rounds or blanks in terms of bringing life or death. So will we use our words to day to tear down or to build up? Will we do acts of service or disservice? Will our attitudes and interactions with others draw them towards or away from Jesus?' (Simon Guillebaud)*



Lord, help me to think, act and speak words of life today.  
We pray for refuse collectors, street cleaners and landfill workers.

## **Friday August 29<sup>th</sup>**

***'My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.'*** Psalm 51:17.

*'I like being whole. Being broken doesn't appeal to me at all. Yet when everything's going along wonderfully in my life, I often end up ignoring God for long periods. Then it takes something getting broken for me to come back to him. David, who wrote the above verse, found this too.*

*I was deeply struck by these words by John Eldredge, "Until we are broken, our life will be self-centred, self-reliant; our strength will be our own. So long as you think you are really something in and of yourself, what will you need God for? I don't trust a man who hasn't suffered."*

*That doesn't mean we're to go looking for suffering ... life sends enough brokenness our way without seeking it out. And the comforting thing is, as Vance Havner says, "God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever."*

*So brokenness is to be accepted – not fatally or with resignation – but with anticipation that the Lord will use it for his purposes.' (Simon Guillebaud)*

Lord, I choose to be used in my brokenness today. Amen.

We pray for people with dementia and their carers.



**Saturday August 30<sup>th</sup>**

***'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.'***  
***Philippians 2:3-4.***

*'A rich man went to a psychiatrist to complain that he was miserable despite all his wealth.*



*The psychiatrist took the man to the window and asked, "What do you see?" The man replied, "I see people walking around."*

*The psychiatrist then took the man to stand in front of the mirror and then asked, "Now what do you see?" the man said, "I see only myself."*

*The psychiatrist then said, "In the window there is a glass and in the mirror there is glass, and when you look through*

*the glass of the window, you see others, but when you look into the glass of the mirror you see only yourself. The reason for this is that behind the glass in the mirror is a layer of silver. When silver is added, you cease to see others. You only see yourself."*

*If we are caught up in ourselves, we make a very small package. In an excessively self-obsessed age, Jesus' call is to lay down ourselves for others. It's life-giving on multiple levels.'* (Simon Guillebaud)

*Lord, help me today to look beyond myself to others. Amen.*

