



**ST COLUMBA'S**  
Church of Scotland

# CONGREGATIONAL PASTORAL LETTER

Lent 2022



I H S  
*A home away from home*



Looking back at meditations offered in the early months of the pandemic in 2020, there was a search for what this experience might be revealing – what, if anything, we might be learning? Some suggested we were on the cusp of discovering a kinder, more neighbourly way to live; that enforced silence would make us more appreciative of nature and enforced isolation, more appreciative of companionship.

*“For centuries, all the world’s religious traditions have invited us to discover within ourselves a continuous expansion of heart and spirit. We forget this in our often-frenetic life-styles, but these virus weeks have caused us to halt and become aware in fresh ways of our amazingly rich humanity. Just pause as you read this and listen to that inner voice which tells you that your life is both unique and precious. That you carry within you the possibility of discovering a guiding Light which will not go out. Befriend that inner strength which enables you to keep searching, to be*

*alive to new insights, to encounter these fresh truths which can change the way you think about everything. Shed any pent-up bitterness. Laugh at your own limitations. Look outwards, phone a friend (you don’t need Zoom!) and hear the bird song above the silent streets.”* Peter Millar (Iona Community)

In the first weeks of lockdown, Pope Francis offered homely words that might be worth revisiting, reminding us of experiences and perspectives easily forgotten.

*“Tonight, before falling asleep, think about when we shall all return to the streets. When we hug again. When shopping together will seem like a party. Let’s think about when we can share a coffee and small talk and pictures. Be close to each other. We can think about these present times when it will only be a memory. Normal times will seem like a beautiful gift. Every second will be precious to us. Sunsets and laughter. See you soon and take courage!”*



Wherever we are on the pandemic journey, frailer or frustrated, “returning to normal”, or marked long-term by its losses, we hope that the life, faith and communities of St Columba’s, Pont Street and St Andrew’s, Newcastle will continue to offer you a place of welcome, belonging, peace and purpose. Our congregations long to support others, while simultaneously being reliant on your support.

Two years on from pandemic beginnings, we are not free from it yet. The road leads on. That is echoed in the season of Lent which we are entering. Lent is the annual opportunity to make time, intentionally, to explore the meaning and depth of Jesus’ journey towards the cross and beyond. The opportunity to reach deeper into the mystery of our faith – its tough demands and unexpected treasures, its deaths, and resurrections. The scriptures and accompanying prayers that follow are a small assistance and quiet suggestion, to encourage our combined pilgrimage towards Easter, both in the home place

and the Pont Street place (as well as the Sandyford Road, St Andrew’s, Newcastle place.)

*“These days will come to an end. We will be able to travel the country, swim in the sea, sit in each other’s rooms, lean over tables in restaurants and pubs, dance, hug each other at last with bodies that are no longer contagious. But we mustn’t go back to the world that we were living in before or unlearn the hard-won lessons of collaboration, kindness, empathy, and human vulnerability. We mustn’t stop seeing and valuing the delivery driver, the hospital cleaner, the residential worker, the woman at the checkout, the neighbour over the fence, the stranger on the other side of the road, the person in need, the old and the frail and the forgotten, those hidden in life’s shadows. We can do it better. No going back.”*  
Nigel Gerrard, 2020.

Mindful of what has passed, expectant for what will come, let us walk on together, in the company of Christ.



## Lent 1: Sunday 6th March

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Luke 4:1-2*

**Read:** Luke 4:1-13: Jesus in the wilderness

**Pray:** Lord Jesus Christ,  
you refused to turn stones into bread.  
Save us from using our power,  
however little,  
to satisfy the demands of selfishness  
in the face of the greater needs of others.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you refused to leap from the temple top.  
Save us from displaying our skills,  
however modest,  
to win instant popularity  
in the face of nobler calls on our abilities.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you refused to bend the knee to a false god.  
Save us from offering our devotion,  
however weak,  
to cheap or easy religion  
in the face of the harder path  
on which you bid us follow you. Amen

## Lent 2: Sunday 13th March

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! Luke 13:34*

**Read:** Luke 13:31-35

**Pray:** Almighty God,  
whose most dear Son went not up to joy  
but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory  
before he was crucified:  
mercifully grant that we,  
walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other  
than the way of life and peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Lent 3: Sunday 20th March

*Then Jesus told this parable: A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down." Luke 13:6-9*

**Read:** Luke 13:1-9: Parable of the fig tree

**Pray:** Lord God, in this world where goodness and evil continue to clash with each other, instil in us, and in all your people, discernment to see what is right, faith to believe what is right; and courage to do what is right. Keep us aware of the subtlety of sin, and preserve us, body, mind, and soul, through the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Lent 4: Sunday 27th March

*Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So, Jesus told them this parable: "There was a man who had two sons." Luke 15:1-3, 11*

**Read:** Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32: The Parable of the Prodigal Son

**Pray:** Lord Jesus Christ, you called your disciples to go forward with you on the way to the cross. Since you first walked that road countless millions have followed you. In all that we do as your disciples, save us from false familiarity with your journey. May we never presume to step into your shoes, but make us small enough to fit our own, and to walk in love and wonder behind you. Amen.

## Lent 5: Sunday 3rd April

*Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. John 12:1-3*

**Read:** John 12:1-8: Mary Anoints Jesus

**Pray:** Saviour of the world, though easier paths beckoned and friends pleaded for you to stay with them, you turned your face resolutely towards Jerusalem, determined to go all the way to Calvary. Take us with you now, Lord, and show us how through your sufferings evil is conquered and the world is saved. Amen.

## Lent 6: Sunday 10th April: Palm Sunday & Start of Holy Week

*As Jesus was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.*

Luke 19:37-40

**Read:** Luke 19:28-40: Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

**Pray:** Humble and riding on a donkey, we greet you.  
Acclaimed by crowds and carolled by children, we cheer you.  
Moving from the peace of the countryside to the corridors of power, we salute you: CHRIST OUR LORD.

You are giving the beast of burden a new dignity;  
you are giving majesty a new face;  
you are giving those who long for redemption a new song to sing.  
With them, with heart and voice, we shout: 'HOSANNA!' Amen.

## Holy Week

**Pray:** Lord Jesus Christ, in this sacred and solemn week when we see again the depth and mystery of your redeeming love, help us to follow where you go, to stop where you stumble, to listen when you cry, to hurt as you suffer, to bow our heads in sorrow when you die, so that when you are raised to life again we may share your endless joy. Amen.

**Prayers:** Church of Scotland Book of Common Order (1994)



# Journey to Easter

## Lent 2022

Ways to travel through Lent this year  
[www.stcolumbas.org.uk/lent-and-easter](http://www.stcolumbas.org.uk/lent-and-easter)

### Lent Appeal 2022

**Association Collaboration à la Sante Publique Burkina Faso (CSPB)** <http://cspb.cagnes.pagesperso-orange.fr/>

This year we support the CSPB Association, a small French registered charity created in 2012, providing much needed family planning and other related medical services in the Northern Region of Burkina Faso.

### Lent Book Study 2022

**“The Nail” by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York**

Weekly discussion group, led by the ministers: Evening Group: 7-8pm, Wednesday 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th March & 6th April) Morning Group: 10.30-11.30am, Thursdays (3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st March & 7th April) Sign up, via Church Office. Please purchase own copy of book in advance.

### Film scripture meditations

Short films from Rev Christopher Rowe, minister of Colston Milton Parish Church, Glasgow. Reminding us of our links to the wider work of the Church of Scotland. Via website.

### Easter Journey for young people

A weekly image & meditation for our young people from Revd David Donald Scott. Via website.



### Zoom Coffee Morning

Wednesday morning speakers and some familiar faces, throughout Lent. Contact church office to be included in the zoom invitation.

### Palm Crosses

Traditionally gifted and received on Palm Sunday; compass and companion for the journey to Easter resurrection. In uncertain times, posted early.

### Services in Holy Week

Short meditations for Monday 11th – Wednesday 13th & Saturday 16th April, via the website. Led by the young people of St Columba's.

#### ***In person & Livestream:***

**10th April** Palm Sunday & Reading of the Passion (11am)

**14th April** Maundy Thursday Communion Service (8pm)

**15th April** Words & Music for Good Friday (11am)

**17th April** Easter Morning Holy Communion (11am)



## Maintaining Community and Supporting Each Other

Everybody can play a part in maintaining our community via telephone, e-mail or letter. Our elders are encouraged to stay in touch with those in their districts, and church members are welcome to approach the church office to request a contact from their elder or the ministers.

## 300 Years of the Kirk in Newcastle

From April to October, starting with a visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on Easter morning, St Andrew's, Newcastle celebrates 300 years of Church of Scotland worship and presence in Newcastle.

## Summer Events

Looking forward, look out for our celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Anniversary (Sunday 5th June) & St Columba's Day (Sunday 12th June).



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If you would like IT help to access services/support online, contact the office.

The annual Trustees report and accounts will be available online and, on request, in hard copy from the office, from early April.