

“...they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,
upon them has the light shined.” (Isaiah 9:2)

Cults Parish Church

Prayer Diary December 2017



A frivolous picture? Yes, but we are surrounded by frivolity in this season, mixing uneasily with the seriousness of our times and the discomfoting wonder of the real Advent and Christmas.

So don't forget your mince-pie prayers this month. Each time you are about to enjoy a treat, make a silent prayer on behalf of this world or those in it.

We have heard so powerfully from our ministers that love is the answer. We're not loving enough. Trouble is, it needs effort. May this advent time and Christmas – when the Greatest Help comes to us – strengthen our efforts to live for Christ and rid society of some of its ills.

(P.S. Do find out about Christian Aid's "Enough for Everyone" Advent campaign, which is also linking mince pies with caring for humanity.)

The Faith Journey Core Group hopes that this Prayer Diary will be a useful daily companion that will help unite us in prayer at Cults Kirk. Please send your contributions or requests for the January diary by December 13th to Andrew Fairhead. andrew.fairhead@btinternet.com Phone 01224 861926.

Friday December 1 *(From Aberdeen Cyrenians) As you begin to plan your Christmas with family and friends, please think about those in our community who have no home to go to this festive season, those who will not see their family and friends, and those who will spend their Christmas Day with Aberdeen Cyrenians.*

We pray also for all those who, though they have homes, have no family to share Christmas with; for those whose loved ones seem far away, through distance, illness or death. Lord, give us the will, the grace and the imagination to do something to make their Christmas happier, to help them share in the spirit of togetherness.

Saturday December 2 We ask the Lord's blessing on all Christmas events, including our coffee morning with its wassailing waiters, and our carol-singing at Drum; and Newton Dee's advent fair. May our celebrations and fellowship truly honour the gift He has given.

Sunday December 3 *"My soul doth magnify the Lord!" Mary sings for all who are hoping for God's promise of justice to be fulfilled. Even as we wait for the birth of the babe, hope is being born again in today's world through those who work for God's justice. (Cathy Talbot)*

Our evening service considers people who find themselves in dark situations, and their need to cling on to what is sacred. Let us pray for all in difficult and challenging situations (as Mary and Joseph were). May they hear those words "Do not be afraid", and be given strength that will lead them out of their darkness.

Monday December 4 I give thanks for Christian Aid's Christmas appeal "Enough for Everyone", which our carol singing last weekend and next, and our after-service refreshments, are raising funds for. May I and many others get the chance to avoid excess and waste this Christmas, and help to feed those in the world who are hungry.

Tuesday December 5 *Our Christmas Music to Remember is bound to be full of happy memories. Our dear elderly friends still know love when they see it around them, and they know the love story that prompts the joy of this Advent time.*

Wednesday December 6 *So many people are afraid, Lord, for all sorts of reasons. How can I help? Well, You know best: it's why You sent Jesus. As He did, may I notice fear, and make sure that person has a friend to talk to.*

Thursday December 7 *Lord, bless our Thursday activities – Advent poetry, Messy Church and Revelation Group – and Bible study, which will resume next year. They are all aimed at getting to know You better, and Your wishes and plans for us. Bless the new families that have started coming to Messy Church. May we be lighting their way to following Christ.*

Friday December 8 *When we decorate something, it's often for others' enjoyment and benefit, and so it is with those who are setting up Christmas trees in the sanctuary today. Decorating is an important aspect of celebrating Christmas, and we pray it will help others to enter into the redeeming wonder of it all.*

Saturday December 9 *We ask our Lord to bless all the charity work being done in this country and around the world. What a massive exertion of human endeavour it represents, and though not all done in Christ's name, it all honours His wishes. We pray that through its direct action and its lobbying, it will eventually overcome the influences that cause unfairness and suffering in the world.*

Sunday December 10 *As we prepare for Christmas, and worship in our lovely, peaceful sanctuary, let us pray for Christians in the Middle East, who may be worshipping quietly in small groups in the shell of their ransacked church. We ask our Lord to be with them as they hold their faith with such resilience and courage, and keep the light of Jesus shining in that region.*

Monday December 11 *As our Christmas tree festival begins, let us pray for all who come to our sanctuary looking for peace and quiet and also those looking to find the true message of the Christmas story. May God be with them in their seeking.*

Tuesday December 12 *What wisdom do I need to comprehend You, Father, who sends a baby to overturn the world? Or should I just be thankful?*

Wednesday December 13 *The O50 Group are having their Christmas Party this afternoon. We pray it will be filled with happiness and that everyone will feel the true spirit of Christmas.*

Lord we thank You that we can offer the facilities of our Kirk and Kirk Centre to our whole community. We pray that the Morven singers and their audience this evening will feel the warmth and notice the devoted care we have given to our Sanctuary, so appropriate to their Christmas concert.

Thursday December 14 *We pray Lord that this evening's special service will bind up the broken-hearted, comfort those who mourn; and give them a garland to wear instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, a garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness, and a renewed thankfulness for those they loved. (Based in Isaiah 61)*

Friday December 15 *A prayer for the Middle East, year after year in turmoil, and especially for the millions of innocent people who are subject to extreme danger, violence, hatred and famine. We pray that people of all religions and denominations can learn to respect each other, so that their political leaders will have little excuse for the bloodshed and suffering they are presiding over.*

Saturday December 16 *As the JAM children rehearse for tomorrow's nativity story and have their party, we pray that all children at some point in their growing years will be given such stories to ground them in the presence of a loving God.*

Sunday December 17 *(A children's prayer from Christian Aid, on the day of our children's and family service.) At Christmas, we come together to give thanks and worship You, Lord. We sing Christmas carols and hear the nativity story from the Bible. You want us to remember it and celebrate, but also to notice when things are not fair in our world. You want us to share so all may have enough. We will do our best. Amen.*

Monday December 18 *Lord, You want me to remove oppression and injustice, to feed the hungry and house the homeless, and not to refuse to help. May all my actions be such as Your Son taught. (Based on Isaiah 58:6-7)*

Tuesday December 19 *We are thankful and full of admiration for Aberdeen's street pastors. May the Lord give them the energy, grace, love and compassion that they must hand out so freely. May their "safe bus" be a place of light and comfort for people who suddenly find there is no room at the inn.*

Wednesday December 20 *We pray that all who are travelling during this holiday time will arrive safely, and find peace and pleasure at their destination.*

Thursday December 21 *A special prayer for refugees, faced with anguish and uncertainty. May the Christian ones be given some opportunity at least to draw comfort from Christ's redemption story; and the others some warmth, human and physical, to ease their cold and bleak journey.*

Friday December 22 *The schools break up today, or already have. Let us give a prayer of thanks for all teachers, their assistants and others who take such care to make education a thing of value and pleasure for our children and young people. May they find refreshment in their short Christmas break.*

Saturday December 23 *We pray for all who work, and especially those who cannot take the time off for Christmas that they would like to. While they work for us, we can be careful to show our appreciation.*

Sunday December 24 The birth of Christ expresses something unutterably beautiful and redemptive about the ever renewed and renewing presence of God in the world. The real Christmas celebrates the Divine in a humanity that is both messy and miraculous. (Rev. Lucy Winkett)

Monday December 25 *So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. Father, I will keep this wonderful thought in my mind today. Our Christmasses take many different forms, but then so do Your blessings. It is enough if I can keep in mind what today's gift really means.*

I think of all the gatherings of people today, and what has inspired them. I give thanks particularly for those invitations that will make all the difference to the recipient, such as the heartfelt invitations to Christmas lunch at our Hub.

Tuesday December 26 Bringing the Good News to Palestine. That's what the Bible Society is doing, just as Jesus did two thousand years ago. Let us pray for all its projects around the world, and for its brave, committed staff and partners.

Wednesday December 27 *We who have more money and power than many others should be reminded again by the Christmas story that our pursuit of these twin goals is as dangerous as it is aspirational. Christmas challenges us to give ourselves away, both spiritually and practically. (Rev. Lucy Winkett)*

Thursday December 28 How tragic that some of the powerful in this world abuse their time and place in it by slaughtering innocents. In Herod, we can see their warped logic. Jesus came to remove such power and misunderstanding. How much we must yet learn.

Friday December 29 *God of Love, help me to concentrate now on that place within me where my love, warmth, feeling and forgiveness dwells. I would have it transfigure whatever is negative, distant or cold in me. Amen. (Using words of John O'Donohue)*

Saturday December 30 Certainly there have been setbacks this year, dreadful for some, but there has been good news as well, lots of it. It can't erase the bad, but it gives us hope and the inspiration to carry on, making sure we are part of the Good News.

Sunday December 31 *May God and all His angels be around you on every side, bringing unexpected kindness, bringing hope in times of hardship, bringing encounters that enrich your faith, bringing glimpses of the heavens to the creatures of the earth. Amen. (The Alternativity organisation)*