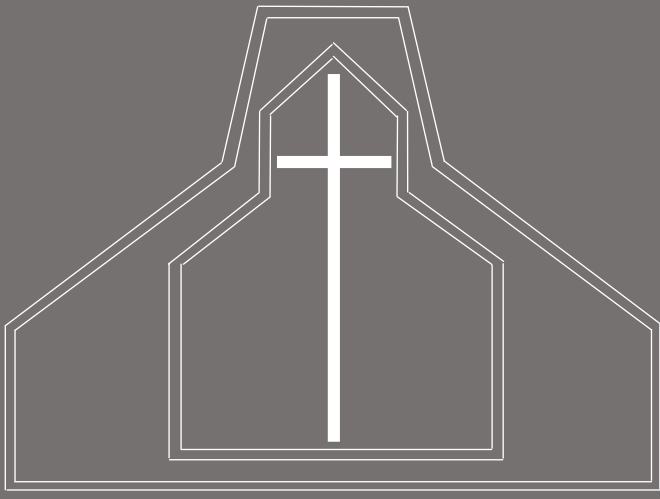


But the angel said to him,
“Do not be afraid,
Zechariah; your prayer has
been heard. Your wife
Elizabeth will bear you a
son and you are to name
him John.”

Luke 1:13



Prayer Diary December 2024

St Columba's
Hillhead
Parish Church

Sunday 1

St Columba's Hillhead. On this first Sunday in Advent continue to pray for the upbuilding of the life and fellowship of the congregation as we look towards the celebration of the Lord's birth at Christmas. Pray that as God's people within our Church we may work for the Lord together in unity and love and that the mission of the Church will know God's blessing in life and witness. Give thanks for the continued coming together and growth in fellowship of folks from both congregations and for the natural ways in which this happening such as over tea and coffee on a Sunday morning. Pray that this may continue to strengthen and deepen the love and unity of God's people and that with encouragement to and from each other congregational life will be strong in the Lord especially as we celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper today. Give thanks for the well-maintained premises we have as a Congregation; pray that they may continue to be well-utilised and that God will bless that use and keep the buildings secure in and for the community.

Monday 2

Men's Group. Give thanks for the Men's Group and for those who have the opportunity to meet together for social activities

and friendship in enjoyment and recreation. Remember Jim Kennedy as new Chairman and new Secretary Ian Gibb as they coordinate the week to week activity. Pray that there will be a regular good attendance and those who come will know the warm welcome and friendship offered as a helpful support through the longer darker nights of winter.

Tuesday 3

National and Local Government. Bring before the Lord all those in positions of authority across the United Kingdom across the political spectrum. Remember especially our Prime Minister and First Minister of Scotland and the members of their Government that they may seek to exercise integrity and wisdom in their life and work. Pray that policy-makers will be thoughtful and discerning as they make decisions and draft new policy. Especially pray for Christians in political life. Pray that they will be able to live out their faith in their life and work and influence political decisions for good. Pray that the Lord may give strength to them especially when times are difficult and pressure is on them because of their faith.

Wednesday 4

Following Jesus Group/Friendship Club. Give

thanks for these invaluable groups which seek to help adults/children and young people with a learning difficulty to come to know Jesus as they meet on Wed. evenings. Remember all those who come along and pray especially for Pat Muir and her team of helpers as they share friendship and fellowship with those who come along. Pray that they may communicate the Gospel message with simple language and through helpful activities as well as sharing together over refreshments.

Thursday 5

Walk & Talk. Give thanks for those who share together in Walk and Talk on Thurs. afternoons. Give thanks for the opportunity to share gentle exercise with the importance of sharing mutual interest in, and concern for, each other in the sharing of lives. Remember and give thanks for Trevor Patterson as he plans and leads each walk so that folks may enjoy the opportunity and the beauty of God's Creation.

Friday 6

Little Fishes and Busy Bees. Give thanks that these Groups continue to be well-attended each week. Pray especially for the Busy Bees Group that those on the waiting list will be understanding of having to cap numbers for reasons of available space. Remember

the leaders and helpers of both groups as they plan and oversee the life of these groups especially for safety and wisdom in the outworking of the activities. Pray for those who come along, both carers and children, that they will be aware that they are coming into a warm, inviting place where they are valued.

Saturday 7

Those who are Unwell, in Hospital or in Care. Remember all those who are unwell, awaiting or undergoing investigation/ diagnosis/surgery/ treatment. Pray that they may know peace and strength from the Lord at this time. Give thanks for those who are recovering from surgery/treatment and pray that they will know increasing strength and wholeness in the forthcoming days. Pray for those who need ongoing medical intervention or prolonged treatment. Pray for patience and endurance and a continued reliance on the Lord. Remember those with painful or debilitating conditions and their family/friends who support and care for them. May they know God's grace day by day.

Sunday 8

The Suffering Church. Give thanks for the work of Open Doors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Barnabas Aid which help persecuted

Christians across the world and highlight their suffering to the world's notice. Also give thanks for the 26 men, most of whom are Christians and members of the Sudanese Church of Christ in Shendi, who have been released after being detained while fleeing conflict in Khartoum, Sudan. They were harassed, beaten and interrogated while detained at the Almodada Unit of Military Intelligence which is notorious for its use of torture and other forms of violence on detainees. Ask the Lord to heal, comfort and restore them and their families and provide for their every need. Pray also for peace and stability in the country. Remember also the 100,000 North Korean Christians who are supported by underground networks and pray for their safety. Especially uphold believers who are bravely following Jesus despite enormous opposition, or raising support and awareness for the persecuted church. This is the worldwide Body of Christ.

Pray also for those attending the Hurting Hearts Service this afternoon at 3pm. Pray that they may know the Lord's comfort and the empathy of each other for wounded hearts and spirits.

Monday 9

The Bereaved. Remember those who have lost loved

ones, especially those in recent/not so recent days and personally known to us as Christmas draws near. Remember those who have suffered through sudden trauma or chronic illness. Such loss is devastating for anyone who lost a loved one close to them and grieving can be painful and difficult. Pray that the Lord in His compassion will be close to them especially through dark and difficult days and that those surrounding them may be a quiet and sensitive support. Also, remember the Pizza Party today for some of the children from Hillhead SU Group/Warm Welcome that it may be an encouragement in outreach for the Lord to get to know these young folks in a deeper way and that they equally may draw close to Him.

Tuesday 10

The Guild. Give thanks for the worship, fellowship and service in Christ which the Guild promotes in life and witness as the first half of the Session draws to a close towards Christmas. Especially remember the Guild Projects- Build my Church, Let's Build a House, Bibles for Bairns and Operation Hope in Egypt- that they will be a positive influence for advancing Christ's Kingdom. Give thanks for and remember Gilbert as Convener, Janet as Secretary and Eleanor as Treasurer and pray for the

Christmas Lunch at Hayston Golf Club next Tuesday that it will be a time of enjoyment and fellowship for everyone involved.

Wednesday 11

Midweek Fellowship. Give thanks for the opportunity to worship God and share fellowship together, in a slightly less formal manner than Sunday worship. Give thanks especially for this time of worship and fellowship for those who may not be able to attend Church on Sundays. Pray that God might continue to bless the ministry of the Midweek Service and give thanks for the love and encouragement which those who attend find together with each other as they worship God. Remember Philip as he prepares for leading the worship that the Lord will clearly encourage him to speak His message with love and boldness.

Thursday 12

Those with Mental Health Issues. Remember those whose mental health is struggling at the moment, especially at this time of Christmas. Pray that the Lord would draw close to those who are despairing. Especially remember those known to us who may be struggling. Pray that the Lord will give us the right words to say to someone who is suffering and pray

for opportunities for healing conversations. Pray for an increase in understanding and empathy for mental health issues in society and within the Church. Pray that those suffering will find comfort and respite and a path to full healing.

Remember also those supporting them that they may know patience, love, hope and healing.

Friday 13

The Boys' Brigade. Give thanks for the life and service of the 1st Kirkintilloch BB Company and the weekly meetings of the individual sections. Pray that in each age-group the boys and leaders will delight in their attendance and activities, especially planned Christmas outings and recreation. Pray that there will be a renewed energy for the second half of the current Session and an excitement and keenness in working towards the attainment of the awards. Especially pray that what is learned in the life of the BB might equip and prepare the boys for adult life. Give thanks for the leaders and their commitment and pray for them in their preparation and communication for the boys' encouragement and interest.

Saturday 14

Jo Crotty. Give thanks for the wonderful time Jo had with her family when she

visited Melbourne for 10 days at the end of August/beginning of September for her brother Greg's (who has MND) 56th birthday which was a special time for her and her family. Praise God for His strength to Jo to enable her to complete Term 1 at the Primary School and 3 weeks teaching grammar at the Training Centre. Give thanks also for the wet season and full water tanks.

Please pray for:

1. wisdom in preparing and delivering the Fluency through the Scripture Workshop
2. getting the materials sorted for the trauma healing for the children's workshop and to be able to deliver it late January next year
3. Jo's brother Greg as he finishes work for good (secondary teaching) and the family as they all continue to manage life with his MND.

Sunday 15

Church Worship. Remember the Nativity Service this morning at St. Columba's Hillhead. Pray that it will be a joy and delight to God as the all-age congregation joins in worship and fellowship together. Remember all those taking part that it will unite everyone in a spirit of wonder and gratitude for the significance of the Lord's birth at Bethlehem. Also give thanks for the

enjoyment which this Service also engenders as the timeless Christmas story is presented by those taking part. Pray that this proclaiming of the Gospel will draw the congregation closer to Him.

Monday 16

School Service. Give thanks for the Oxbang Primary School Christmas Service taking place today and for the opportunity of the School and Congregation to work together. Remember Philip as School Chaplain and for the relationship this opportunity presents to share the Christmas story with all those present. Pray that this privilege will be a mutual blessing for those involved and that the Lord will be honoured and delighted with the young people hearing about Him. Pray for fruitfulness in this opportunity.

Tuesday 17

Christmas Events today. Remember the Guild Christmas Lunch today at Hayston Golf Club as folks come together to give thanks for the end of the first half of the Session and enjoy Christmas lunch together which is a pleasant time of fellowship in readiness to celebrate the joy of Christmas.

Also remember the Carol Time at Hillhead Halls this evening. Give thanks for the provision of sandwiches and sausage rolls which are

being served at 6pm to 6.45pm followed by the singing of carols at 6.45pm. Pray for a good group of folks to come along, including those who come to Warm Welcome and use the building at other times to come together to share food and enjoy some carols together.

Pray especially that those who are present may think about the significance of Jesus' birth and hearts will be touched by His love for them.

Wednesday 18

Warm Welcome. Give thanks for the regular weekly opportunity to offer a warm space and caring support to the community at Hillhead Halls. Praise God for the Kitchen Cupboard and pray that it will be adequately stocked to serve the needs of the community and for the help and support available from Christians Against Poverty. Pray that people will know the love and caring support is done in Jesus' name and pray for God's leading as the ministry of Warm Welcome continues to develop

Give thanks too today for the work of Operation Christmas Child and for the items and several envelopes of donations from St Columba's Hillhead for this year's appeal. Pray that these boxes will be delivered and received with joy and gladness by those

to whom they are sent. Pray especially that Jesus will be honoured through these ministries.

Thursday 19

Scripture Union (SU). SU's strategy for 2024-2027 launched in August has a continued emphasis on Ministry at the Margins. Pray for wisdom for those considering where and how new youth projects should be planted, supporting children and young people to make positive choices and creating opportunities to explore faith. Also, children and young people will be on their devices over the school holidays. Pray that they will take the opportunity to delve into SDU Scotland's online content, such as Bible shorts, Explore Christmas and the SU Holidays website. Pray that SU staff will have a restful holiday over the Christmas break, enabling them to return to work with renewed energy and passion for Jesus. Pray for boldness to take up opportunities to share with family and friends what God is doing in the lives of children and young people and something of what they can do with SU Scotland.

Friday 20

The Bible Society. Pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in churches across the United Kingdom. Pray for Christian revival on these shores and that people will

be stirred from spiritual apathy to fresh hope and gospel purpose. The Scottish Bible Society team members are working specifically with a group of Bible Societies encouraging mission resilience which needs to be culturally intelligent and winsome in their relationships. Please pray that the Lord will give them the grace and energy needed. Pray for those working in communications as they share the great stories of what God is doing through Bible ministry across the world. Pray for compassion as they also have to share stories of the significant challenges Bible Societies face. Pray that the Bible Society's Gospel publications will be used by churches to reach out to their wider communities. Pray specifically that every copy given out will be read.

Saturday 21

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Samuel, a 12 year old boy in Kenya, was diagnosed with a rare form of throat cancer after his father took him on a 4 hour journey to the hospital in Narok from their home in Enairebuk, Loita Hills, Kenya, after his mouth had swollen. Samuel was referred to another hospital but his treatment was delayed due to a doctor's strike. He was referred to another hospital where Samuel was able to begin his chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment.

This meant a demanding 7 hour drive over difficult terrain to reach Nairobi, Kenya's capital. Thanks to MAF's relationship with Christian organisation Red Tribe, they were able to fly Samuel and his father to Nairobi, sparing them a long and arduous journey so Samuel could receive the treatment he needed. Please pray that:

1. Samuel's ongoing treatment will result in a complete healing from throat cancer, and that he can cope with any side-effects he may experience.
2. MAF's engineers maintaining their aircraft can keep them in good condition so medical emergency flights will take place.
3. those living in remote communities will be able to get the treatment they need wherever they're ill or injured.

Sunday 22

The Church and Ministry. Remember the work and ministry of God's servants today as they proclaim the Word of God that they may know God's Hand upon them as they serve the Lord, especially at this time of Christmas when people's hearts and minds are directed towards the joy and wonder of the birth of the Son of God at Bethlehem. Pray for the Holy Spirit's boldness in preaching and for God's Word to bear much fruit in

people's lives and that Christ would be honoured and glorified. Pray that His ministers may be mindful and watchful as faithful leaders of Christ's Church and that God may protect them in their living out of the Gospel in daily life. Pray also for the Church of Scotland as it seeks to engage with Scotland in a new and Biblical way and the consequent work of Presbyteries - in working with local congregations in challenging time, especially remembering The Presbytery of Glasgow. Pray for the ongoing life and witness of St Columba's Hillhead in working together to promote discipleship and mission in our local area.

Monday 23

Christians Against Poverty. Pray for the work of Christians against Poverty operating locally. Give thanks for those who serve to help those in need. Times of financial hardship place great pressures on many people and many feel totally helpless for lack of sufficient money to meet necessities especially as the colder months of autumn and winter are upon us with less financial support for heating, as well as the pressure of Christmas spending. Pray that they may receive support when it is needed and remember CAP volunteers as they engage with people to alleviate

their financial circumstances. Give thanks for the opportunity to be involved at the Warm Welcome in Hillhead that this may be a beneficial presence for assistance where needed.

Tuesday 24

Those who are Vulnerable. Give thanks for the work of The Lodging House Mission, Bethany Christian Trust and The Salvation Army who seek to draw near and support those who are vulnerable, especially in these cold and dark days of winter. Remember those who have nowhere to go at Christmas and for whom the time will be difficult and long. Pray that the message of Christmas, that God comes close to us in the giving of His Son Jesus as the Light shining in the darkness and born in the lowliness of a stable, may be a comfort and hope amidst loneliness and isolation. Pray that people's needs will be met in kindness and caring. Remember the Family Christmas Eve Service at St Columba's at 4pm as a celebration of anticipation and expectation of the Coming King.

Wednesday 25

Christmas Day. Give thanks for the Church's celebration of the Birth of Jesus and for the gift of God in giving us His Son. Pray for a joyous celebration of His Birth this

morning as the Church family comes together in worship to the newborn King. Pray that many will know Him as Saviour and Lord and that people will not leave the Church without knowing they have knelt down and met Jesus. Pray for families meeting together today to celebrate Christmas that it will be an enriching time together knowing that Jesus was born into a family life and love at Bethlehem.

Thursday 26

The Leprosy Mission. For people affected by leprosy living in the slums of Mumbai, hope is hard to come by. Stigma and disability mean many rely on begging to survive. Healthcare is a luxury few can afford. Give thanks for the Karuna Mobile Clinic. For Sonu, this clinic is a lifeline. Diagnosed at just 12 years old, Sonu has battled with leprosy for decades. Thankfully, she got the cure. But it was too late to prevent permanent nerve damage. Today, Sonu struggles to walk or even stand. She can't work and has no money for healthcare. "My biggest challenge is looking after the ulcers on my feet," she says. Without the Karuna Mobile Clinic, Sonu wouldn't get the medical she so desperately needs. Pray for those who work at the Mobile Clinic to be able to treat many more like Sonu. Pray also that the Leprosy

Mission will have the funds to continue this vital work to help leprosy sufferers.

Friday 27

Christian Aid. Give thanks for the sum of £1400+ raised at the local Christian Aid Coffee Morning last month as a significant contribution to the work of Christian Aid to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. The present Government made a promise during the recent UK general election that it would 'create a world free from poverty on a liveable planet'. Climate activist Vanessa Nakate has written an open letter to the UK Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, reminding him of Labour's promise and imploring that they keep it. Pray that the momentum to 'keep their promise to the global south' will be sustained and developed to help lower-income countries and communities recover from the damage caused by climate change, adapt to current climate impacts and build resilient, low-carbon futures.

Saturday 28

Ukraine & The Middle East. Continue to remember and pray for the ongoing conflicts in these and other areas of the world, especially in a time of heightened tension and escalation of the war of words and actions of nation

leaders. Pray that a just and lasting solution will be found to end the wars and bring much-needed peace and stability for all, especially for those who suffered under the devastation, loss of life and security for living. Remember world leaders especially through whom much of the resolution will rest, and a forthcoming change of government in the US, that they may come to a mutual understanding and respect, with a desire to end the conflict and live in, and for, peace.

Sunday 29

Tearfund. Give thanks for God's protection and provision for the people of Rwanda with an end to the outbreak of the highly virulent Marburg virus in the country (with a fatality ratio of up to 88%). A total of 66 cases and 15 deaths have been recorded during the outbreak. No new cases have been reported since 30th October and the last Marburg patient was discharged on 8th November, setting off the mandatory 42-day countdown to declare the end of the outbreak. Health workers, who constitute almost 80% of the cases, primarily became infected with providing emergency care to their colleagues and patients. Please pray for the families of the victims of the disease and pray that no new cases arise. Also remember the people of the

Philippines who have suffered greatly through multiple typhoons which have swept through the country. Lift up those who have lost their homes and loved ones. Pray for safety, protection, comfort and access to resources. Pray for wisdom for Tearfund's local partners as they respond to these devastating storms and typhoons.

Monday 30

Prison Fellowship Scotland (PFS). Give thanks for the long-standing working partnership with the Scottish Prison Service. Volunteers wishing to work with Prison Chaplaincy are re-directed to PFS due to the quality of their volunteer processes and training. Give thanks also for the persistent demand for PFS's work in restorative justice, specifically in their 6week 'Sycamore Tree' course which helps offenders look at the consequences of their crimes as this is developed through an increasing number of Scottish prisons. Pray especially for children and family of prisoners at Christmastime affected by imprisonment and pray for PFS as it seeks to further develop its work within prisons. Remember Rev. Gary Caldwell in his work as Prison Chaplain at Greenock Prison as he serves staff and those imprisoned there. Give

thanks for changed lives through God's grace as he engages with those in Greenock Prison.

Tuesday 31

New Year's Eve. Let us quietly reflect on the year past and give thanks to the Lord for His gracious presence with us throughout this past year, through its ups and its downs as many of us have known. Let us learn from the past and so be stronger to face the future with what it may hold. King George VI, not usually a compelling speaker, inspired and reassured the nation by quoting a poem in his Christmas message of 1939: "I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, 'Give me light that I may tread safely into the unknown'. And he replied 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God'."

May this be our prayer today - pray that we will walk into and through the New Year holding the hand of the Lord ever more closely.