

18th Sunday after Pentecost, 1st October 2023

"I do not want anyone to die. Turn away from your sins and live." Ezekiel 18:32

Opening Hymn – Crown Him with many crowns (MP 109)

Collect for Pentecost 18

Lord, may your grace at all times go before us, and follow on behind: and so continually direct us to good works; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Old Testament: Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32

18 The LORD spoke to me ² and said, "What is this proverb people keep repeating in the land of Israel?

'The parents ate the sour grapes,
But the children got the sour taste.'

³ "As surely as I am the living God," says the Sovereign LORD, "you will not repeat this proverb in Israel any more. ⁴ The life of every person belongs to me, the life of the parent as well as that of the child. The person who sins is the one who will die.

²⁵ "But you say, 'What the Lord does isn't right.' Listen to me, you Israelites. Do you think my way of doing things isn't right? It is your way that isn't right. ²⁶ When a righteous person stops doing good and starts doing evil and then dies, he dies because of the evil he has done. ²⁷ When someone evil stops sinning and does what is right and good, he saves his life. ²⁸ He realises what he is doing and stops sinning, so he will certainly not die, but go on living. ²⁹ And you Israelites say, 'What the Lord does isn't right.' You think my way isn't right, do you? It is your way that isn't right.

³⁰ "Now I, the Sovereign LORD, am telling you Israelites that I will judge each of you by what you have done. Turn away from all the evil you are doing, and don't let your sin destroy you. ³¹ Give up all the evil you have been doing, and get yourselves new minds and hearts. Why do you Israelites want to die? ³² I do not want anyone to die," says the Sovereign LORD. "Turn away from your sins and live."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Hymn – Rejoice, the Lord is King! (MP 575)

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

²³ Jesus came back to the Temple; and as he taught, the chief priests and the elders came to him and asked, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you such right?"

²⁴ Jesus answered them, "I will ask you just one question, and if you give me an answer, I will tell you what right I have to do these things. ²⁵ Where did John's right to baptise come from: was it from God or from human beings?"

They started to argue among themselves, "What shall we say? If we answer, 'From God,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe John?' ²⁶ But if we say, 'From human beings,' we are afraid of what the people might do, because they are all convinced that John was a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you, then, by what right I do these things.

²⁸ "Now, what do you think? There was once a man who had two sons. He went to the older one and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ 'I don't want to,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. 'Yes, sir,' he answered, but he did not go. ³¹ Which one of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The older one," they answered.

So Jesus said to them, "I tell you: the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John the Baptist came to you showing you the right path to take, and you would not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. Even when you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel:
Praise to Christ our Lord!

Intercessions

At St Mary's we pray for *Myra, Betty, Gladys, Grace, Anne, Peter, Douglas, Gillian, Alan, Heather, Thomas, June, Jeff, Sheona, Dolly, Bill, Robina, Ellen, and Cherie.*

At St Catharine's we pray for *Chrissie, Don, Pamela, Etta, Greta, Rena, Kathleen, Hamish, Doreen, Stuart, Eileen, Betty, Charlie, Kieran, Mandy, Davina, Nora, Pat, Dave, and Ricky.*

We remember the faithful departed: *Doreen Scotland*

At both churches we pray for *Brian, Beth, Oliver, Judith, Ross, Suzanne, Yulia, Grace, Sharon, Sandra, Caroline, and Sally.*

Hymn following the peace – There is a Redeemer (MP 673)

Post communion prayer (*prayer b*) on p.30 of the blue book beginning...
Father of all...

Hymn – When I survey the wondrous cross (MP 755)

Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

NOTICES

The Big Sing is this afternoon at Livingston United Parish Church, 3pm. Raising funds for The Scottish Association for Mental Health. Please show your support for this initiative. It's the first time an event like this has been held in Livingston, so it would be good to show them we care!

The **Monday Group** continues its programme of events for the year on 2nd October at St Mary's hall at 1.30pm, when the speaker will be Yvonne Paton who will speak about **Open Doors**, a charity that supports the persecuted church across the world. Followed by refreshments.

Our monthly **Film Club** will continue on Tuesday 3rd October at 3.30pm when the film will be *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile* (PG). It is free to attend, but a small donation for refreshments would be welcome. Please let your friends and family know this is on.

The Wednesday service is at St Mary's this week, with Morning Prayer at 9.30am and Communion at 10.15am. This also forms part of our Day of Prayer for Grangemouth (see below)

The 4th October is a **Prayer Day** for Grangemouth for all the Churches of Grangemouth. The current plan is to have different churches open at the following times (subject to change):

- St Mary's 9-11 (including Morning Prayer at 9.30 and the 10.15 eucharist)
- 11-1pm Kirk of the Holy Rood
- 1-3pm Zetland Church
- 3-5pm Sacred Heart or Christ the King
- 5-7pm Abbotsgrange

We will also meet for prayer at:

- The bandstand in the Precinct at 10am
- A prayer walk around the Refinery at 12pm, meeting at INEOS hq (parking across the road, not in INEOS car park)
- Zetland Park at the sundial at 4pm

Please feel free to come and go as you please at these times and places.

Afternoon Tea Service at St Mary's at 2.30pm on 22nd October. This is a short communion service followed by an afternoon tea aimed especially at those who find it difficult to come to church in the morning. Invitations should be sent out and lifts will need to be arranged.

Next vestry meetings: St Catharine's will meet at 6.30pm on Monday 9th October in the hall. St Mary's will meet at 6.30pm on Tuesday 24th October at the Rectory.

Church AGMs: St Mary's AGM will be on Sunday 5th November following the morning service. Reports should be submitted by Sunday 8th October.

St Catharine's AGM will be on Sunday 26th November following the morning service. Please note this service will start early at 10.30am so that the AGM doesn't take us too late into the afternoon.

For each of these Sundays, Willie and Susan will both be at the AGM, so cover will be found for the other church.

Sunday 29th October will be a **Joint Service** at St Catharine's at 11.30am as it is the fifth Sunday of the month.

Contact details

Rector: Rev Willie Shaw, stmarysandstcatharines@virginmedia.com,
01324 482438

Deacon: Rev Susan Ward, susanward54@gmail.com, 07760 274272

Secretary at St Mary's: Claire Begg, claire.begg@yahoo.com, 07708
365807

Secretary at St Catharine's: Eileen Spence, eileen@scarymoments.co.uk,
07963 557921

Charity numbers: St Catharine's: SC002083 & St Mary's: SC021643