**Fairmilehead Church Prayer Diary for October 2024**

**Tuesday 1st** Daniel Barenboim believes that music can bridge barriers and foster friendships. On International Music Day, pray God’s blessing on our Praise Band and on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra which brings together Israeli and Palestinian musicians to make wonderful music together and help develop friendship and peace.

**Wednesday 2nd** Today India celebrates “Gandhi Jayanti”, marking the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, a staunch advocate for religious freedom, who wanted peace between all people, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, or Christian. Pray for 130 pastors in Uttar Pradesh jailed without bail for their faith on fraudulent charges, that they will be speedily acquitted. Pray that India’s Supreme Court will reject new state laws banning prayer for healing and meeting for worship.

**Thursday 3rd** Pray for this afternoon’s Time of Stillness to be an “island of peace” for those in need of serenity and solace.

**Friday 4th** On the day we remember St. Francis, aware that today is World Animal Day and Sunday is World Wildlife Day, may we all find a moment to tune in to the created world, look at it with childlike eyes, and find something of our loving Creator there.

**Saturday 5th** On World Teachers’ Day, pray for all teachers, doing a job which is increasingly demanding and difficult, and thank God for our Minister’s involvement with Buckstone Primary School, especially the deeply Christian initiative of the Good Samaritan Award, for noticing someone in need and helping to make things better.

**Sunday 6th**  In our society, so full of curses, we must fill each place we enter with our blessings.” (Henri Nouwen). Today is our Harvest Thanksgiving Communion Service! Our Harvest gifts will go to baby and toddler food banks across Edinburgh. Pray that we come ready to give joyful thanks for all our many blessings and leave with such grateful hearts that we become a blessing to everyone we meet.

**Monday 7th** Pray for the Chapters Book Club which meets today as they read “The Bookseller of Inverness” by S.G. McLean, requesting that the fellowship engendered and thoughtful exchanges will deepen understanding of life and help form lasting friendships.

**Tuesday 8th** We all know someone whose body is hurting: in National Arthritis Week and Back-Care Awareness Week, pray for medical help, healing and relief from pain for someone you know who suffers from such trouble.

**Wednesday 9th** Tomorrow is World Day Against the Death Penalty. Last year China executed over 1,000 people, Iran at least 853, Saudi Arabia 172, after mostly utterly unfair trials. Pray for an end to this barbaric punishment and the preceding fraudulent trials.

**Thursday 10th** On World Mental Health Day, consider the pressing issue of chronic stress that leads to “burnout”. It doesn’t happen overnight; it’s gradual. Pray for employees and managers to unite in recognising the signs of poor mental health and providing continuing mutual support.

**Friday 11th** In 2023 one million people were living in poverty in Scotland, including 24% of all children. Tomorrow representatives of the Church of Scotland and other denominations meet with the Poverty Alliance for a conference on the Minimum Income Guarantee, adopted as official policy at this year’s General Assembly. Pray for real practical progress across Britain to achieve a minimum income floor below which no one would be allowed to fall.

**Saturday 12th** Most Hospices are suffering from a dire shortage of funds. On World Hospice and Palliative Care Day, let us focus our prayers on our own Marie Curie Hospice, asking for adequate funding and staffing, and for God to bless every member of staff and patient with His loving healing hands.

**Sunday 13th** On the International Day for Disaster Reduction, our minds almost automatically turn to the Israel-Palestine conflict, and our hearts beg God for an end to the non-stop violence. Of the 1,000 Christians in Gaza before the conflict, 33 have died and 300 have left: pray for God to help the remaining 650 maintain their faith and be a light of hope in the exploding darkness.

**Monday 14th** Pray God’s blessing and protection on all who teach and learn at the Church of Scotland’s Tabeetha School in Jaffa, Israel, a shining example of how 330 Christians, Jews, and Muslims can live and work together in harmony, unafraid of differences of race or faith, able to discuss freely in a terribly polarised society.

**Tuesday 15th** Rural women make up 40% of the world’s agricultural labour force, but own 15% of the land. On the International Day of Rural Women, let us pray: “Father, pour out your love on them. Bless them with unwavering strength and courage. Shower them with Your grace and wisdom. Guide their steps and fill their hearts with love. May they all find comfort in Your presence.”

**Wednesday 16th** This year the Guild has adopted Release International’s Project “Operation Hope” in Egypt. Pray for the 2,000 marginalised, destitute, persecuted Christians in rural upper Egypt who will be helped with income-generating work, practical help such as new rooves for houses, and spiritual and psychological care. (See 30th Oct. for the Guild’s other chosen project)

**Thursday 17th** On international Conflict Resolution Day, as well as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let us recognise the terrible effects of continuing violent conflict on the world’s poorest people. The invasion of Ukraine increased world prices of all fuels, energy, wheat, maize and cooking oil, which hurt the poorest most. Pray for speedy negotiated ends to the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

**Friday 18th** Thank God for the appointment of Iain, our new Church Officer, and Angus, our new Church Centre Administrator. Pray that they will feel welcome and part of our church family.

**Saturday 19th** “The Lord says, Let not the wise man bask in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his might, not the rich man in his riches. Let them boast in this alone: that they truly know Me, and understand that I am the Lord of justice and of righteousness whose love is steadfast.’ (Jeremiah Ch. 9 v. 23-24) Pray that our church and we ourselves may know God’s steadfast love so deeply that we remain always committed to justice in every action we take.

**Sunday 20th** “We are either in the process of resisting God’s truth or in the process of being shaped by His truth.” (Charles Stanley) Pray that all of us who attend Fairmilehead Church may be “shaped” by God as we hear His biblical truth each Sunday.

**Monday 21st**  “Nothing in life is more wonderful than Faith –the one great moving force which we can neither weigh in the balance nor test in the crucible, intangible…as gravitation…Mysterious, indefinable, known only by its effects, faith pours out an unfailing stream of energy.” (Sir William Osler). Pray that the wonderful Faith which we share at Fairmilehead Church may grow more powerful and that the loving energy of the Holy Spirit may shine through us.

**Tuesday 22nd** “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you. (Lewis B. Smedes) Everyone has something or someone to forgive in their lives. For everyone in our church fellowship, ask God to be at work in our hearts with his amazing forgiveness, making us fully prepared and willing to forgive, both deliberately and repeatedly.

**Wednesday 23rd** Some children have died suddenly at night from epilepsy (through asphyxia). On Sudden Death from Epilepsy Action Day, pray especially for those endangered by longer than 5-minute convulsions. Ask God’s blessing on Epilepsy Action, for generous funding for clinic staffing and much-needed research, and for better training for all of us on how to support a person suffering a seizure. ([www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/first-aid](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/first-aid))

**Thursday 24th** Nazila Ghana, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, spoke to the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association last month. On United Nations Day, pray for her powerful influence to help people worldwide who are persecuted for their faith, including the truthful evidence she can provide for asylum seekers needing refugee status.

**Friday 25th** Praying and expecting everything to come from God and not doing anything yourself is not praying. This is laziness; this is passivity...Many things that happen are not God’s will. When people can contribute something themselves to improve the situation and ask God for the courage to do so, then there is prayer." (Archbishop Oscar Romero) Is there some injustice which is crying out to us and our consciences for help? If we can in any way contribute something ourselves to improve the situation, ask God for the courage and determination to take action now.

**Saturday 26th** Penicuik Silver Band visit us today: thank God for the joy of music and pray this will be a time of enjoyment and delight for players and audience alike.

**Sunday 27th** “Losing our souls means becoming so distracted by and preoccupied with all that is happening around us that we end up fragmented, confused, and erratic.” (Henri Nouwen) Pray for God’s guiding Spirit to keep us constantly true to His loving purposes in all we do and say.

**Monday 28th** “ Earlier in my life I didn’t know that God is with us in our suffering, and that suffering can bring us even closer to Him…Our very worst moments are precisely when God’s grace is most brightly revealed… God never leaves us. God will never forsake us”. (Crystal McVea) Let us pray for someone we know to be suffering deeply that this experience will bring them closer to God and reveal to them how God s always with us, sharing our suffering, especially at the worst times.

**Tuesday 29th** “There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.” (Martin Luther King) The mixture of good and evil is remarkably evident on-line. On International Internet Day, pray for those who own internet platforms to make a deliberate choice to encourage the goodness in human nature and to be much more active and speedy in removing dangerous entries (such as suicide-enabling material).

**Wednesday 30th** All of us are called to care for children and introducing them to faith. The Guild has chosen to support the Scottish Bible Society’s project “Bibles for Bairns”, giving children’s bibles to toddlers. Pray for God to be at work through the faith resources to be given to every child for their first 5 years, so that they come to know all about Jesus and the loving God we meet in His Word.

**Thursday 31st** “We are either in the process of resisting God’s Truth or in the process of being shaped by His Truth.” (Charles Stanley). Let us prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to inform, and if necessary burden, our consciences about our sensitivity to and personal responses to his Truth, as we read it in His Word and hear it revealed in church.