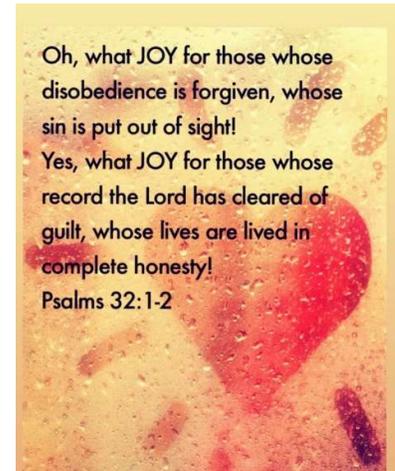




ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH
AUGUST 20TH 2025
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION
BASED ON PSALM 32

¹Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ²Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. ³When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer ⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

⁶Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. ⁷You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. ⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. ⁹Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. ¹⁰Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. ¹¹Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!



QUIET PRAYER

Lord, as I sit here with you I take comfort knowing that I'm sitting with a chorus of angels by my side. I pray Lord, that my eyes and heart will be opened to the wisdom to be found in the psalm of king David. I acknowledge that I'm in constant need of your guidance and grace. Just as David spoke of the happiness that comes from being forgiven, I ask for your mercy to cleanse and renew my fallen self. Help me to recognise the weight of my transgressions and the joy that accompanies my forgiveness. Lord, I pray that you would lead me with your Spirit, teaching me to trust in your plan and to seek refuge in you. May I find strength in your promises and comfort in your presence. As I invite you to speak into my life today, let my heart be open to receive your direction, and may my actions reflect your love and truth.

I pray in the name of the Holy Spirit. Amen

PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS & PRAISE

- Thank you, Lord God, for the freedom to pray, enjoy fellowship, worship and engage in the wider community
- Thank you, Jesus, for the many parables to help me learn more about your kindness, compassion, and discernment to know right from wrong.
- Thank you, Holy Spirit, for being my advocate, guide and my friend when humanity fails me.

PRAYER POINTS OF PRAISE

- Praise to you Lord for the rich and never-ending happiness granted to me
- Praise to you Lord for the music in creation -the sounds of the wind, ocean, the birds of the air and the comfort of animals who share our lives.

- Praise to you Lord for the various ways we communicate with new and old technology. Computers, books, DVDs, the internet, music, drama, poetry, and teachers.

PRAYER POINTS FOR PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- Holy One forgive me when I'm so sure of myself I don't think I have anything to confess
- Holy One forgive my cold heartedness when I say 'no' to someone when I could've easily said 'yes.'
- Holy One forgive our loss of hope, joy, and dreams of a bright future as we settle for second best.

WORDS OF GRACE

You are forgiven. Your past doesn't define you, God's mercy and unconditional love has washed your wrongs away. You are a beloved child of God, your identity is founded in God's love and purpose for you. In and through Christ your sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God amen.

REFLECTION

Psalm 32 may help those who aren't sure why we pray for forgiveness as often as we do. It helps us to understand the necessities of repentance, forgiveness, and the restoration of joy, making it particularly relevant for our current fractured world. In the psalm David expresses his deep relief and exultation upon experiencing the forgiveness of God after confessing his sins. This tension between confession and forgiveness speaks intensely to a society often marred by division, anger, and guilt.

In our contemporary landscape, we witness considerable fractures – be they social, political, or personal. From rising polarization to the struggle against injustice, many feel the weight of unresolved guilt or the pain of broken relationships. Psalm 32 invites us to confront our own wrongdoings, reminding us that acknowledgment of our wrongdoings is the first step toward healing. When individually and as a member of a faith community are willing to confess and recognise our own culpability in the world's injustices, we enable the creation of a safe space for dialogue and understanding to occur.

David's words reveal to us that we can't hide from our failings and if we try it will bring our lives into turmoil – and none of want that. 'For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away,' he writes. This imagery conveys the physical and emotional toll of unacknowledged guilt. In a world where many hide their vulnerabilities under a façade, the psalm boldly calls us to bring our struggles into the light. It's in this transparency that true healing can begin. Not just for the individual, but for the wider community.

God knows we can't do this on our own – we need help. Our help comes to us in the form of guidance. 'I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.' In a world desperate for direction, the promise of God's guidance reminds us that we're not alone. We can find strength in walking together, creating an environment where restoration is possible and where the burdens we carry may be shared and lifted. A healthy disciplined study and prayer life is always helpful where we allow ourselves to listen to the guidance found in the Word and the Holy Spirit. Listening for God's wisdom to come to us opens the pathway for a journey well worth taking.

Our reading today could be seen as a roadmap for navigating the fractures of our world. Through confession, the assurance of forgiveness, and divine guidance, we can move toward healing. As you apply these lessons in your life, you can (if you want too) engage in the transformative power of grace, where unity and compassion in a world which would benefit from a restored relationship with its Creator God would change things forever.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

God, thank you for loving me as only you can. Your love and forgiveness means everything to me as does your assurance that although I fail you many times, over and over again, you don't fail me – I am not lost to you because of them. I am invited into your grace. As I bring my prayer to you this day I do so trusting in your compassion and mercy.

I pray for those who are burdened by guilt and shame. May they find the courage to confess their struggles and receive the healing that comes from your forgiveness. Just as David experienced joy in be cleansed, I ask that they too feel the wight lifted from their shoulders and find peace in your presence.

Lord, I ask that you intercede in our communities, nation, and world who are fractured by division and misunderstanding. God, help us to recognise our own part of maintaining an attitude of bitterness and estrangement. Teach us all the power of humility and healing through reconciliation. May we have the capacity to extend grace to one another, embracing the love that you so freely give.

Spirit of Christ, I ask that you uplift those who are living in silence, whether from physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. As you guide me, help me to be an instrument of your kindness, comfort, always reaching out to those in need. Grant me wisdom to support them in ways that bring hope, joy, and transformation to their lives.

I pray for leaders in our world, that they may seek your guidance in the decisions they make on our behalf. May they be inspired to pursue justice and peace, recognising that true leadership stems from servanthood and humility. Encourage them to seek your ways and to lead from a place of integrity, bringing healing to relationships and communities.

As I finish God, I ask that you strengthen our resolve to allow changes to happen, to allow ourselves to be uncomfortable for a while so the future can rise out of the ashes of the past, living out the truths found in Psalm 32. Help us to be a community that encourages confession, embraces forgiveness, and promotes restorative justice. May our lives reflect your light in this world, helping others to find their way back to you.

In the name of Jesus, who teaches us to love and forgive, we prayerfully lift all these concerns to you.
amen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zCVvqSzzhc&list=RD0zCVvqSzzhc&start_radio=1

