

St Nicholas, Sighthill Parish Church of Scotland

124 Sighthill Loan, Edinburgh, EH11 4NT

We seek to grow **deeper** in our knowledge and love for God, **closer** in fellowship and friendship and **wider** as we share Christ's Good News in Bankhead, the Calders, Sighthill and Parkhead.

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St Nicholas church, Sighthill
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St Nicholas, Sighthill Parish Church of Scotland - Registered Charity No. SC 007068

In the light of the current situation with Coronavirus and guidance from the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland, **all** gatherings for worship will cease at St Nicholas church, Sighthill until further notice.

This is with immediate effect and will include Easter services.

With regret,
John Wallace, Session Clerk

Meanwhile, Tom and the worship team are glad and indeed privileged to bring the first Sunday service to your home.



Join others in our parish and beyond on Sunday, from 10:30am (or at any other time that suits you) to worship God, in the comfort of your home.

God is good... all the time

Opening prayer

Dear God,
Saviour and Shepherd of Your people,
we are gathered to praise You,
to encourage one another,
and to seek Your will for our lives,
for our church, and for our world.

Open our eyes to the traffic between heaven and earth, and to the wonder of Your call to live in the light, through Him who is the light of the world, even Jesus Christ, Amen.

Psalm 23 - A Psalm of David.

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. ⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (NKJV).

First (Tom's) brief reflection

This is one of my favourite Psalms. Many know it or have recited and sang it in church, school assemblies or at funeral service. Yet, like in the case of the Lord's prayer, I fear that many who read, sing or recite it miss its core message and affirmation. For example, what does it mean for a shepherd to make sheep in a desert to 'lie down in (not feed, but lied down in) green pastures? I like this psalm because it helped to direct and indeed ground my journey of trust in God. During my times of need as a ghetto kid, living in a dysfunctional polygamous family, with a present-but-absent alcoholic father (read a bad example of a good shepherd!), I learnt that it was possible:

- to lack nothing [in the company of the Lord, my Shepherd],
- to lie down [with Him or because of Him] in green pastures and
- to rest **beside clean, much, free and readily available** quiet water. This emphasis, **in bold** is mine and is intended to show how I, on the one hand, struggled and, on the other, valued this portion of scripture especially during those times when again I, like many others around me, did not have clean, much, free and readily available water.

Many, I should add, still do not have clean quiet water).

Another Reflection

Still waters are a novelty for my soul
I like the rage of the rapids
or the thunder of the mighty falls,
the rainbows reflected in the spray,
the thrill of the chase.

Still waters challenge me
to stop and breathe gently,
to be nurtured,
to experience grace,
to see clouds reflected
and beautified in the stillness.

And I fear that I am diminished
as my soul is stilled
for I am accustomed to turbulence.
I thrive on the agitation
and founder in the stillness.

The Lord, who is my shepherd,
leads me by still waters
not to diminish but to strengthen my soul.

Rev Jock Stein, retired CoS Minister,

Rt Rev Colin Sinclair (the Moderator of the Church of Scotland) offers us this prayer as we deal with a new illness in our communities - A prayer as we face the Coronavirus [COVID-19]

Let us pray,

Living God, in our hour of need we turn again to you, for we have nowhere else to turn. We put our faith in you, because you have proved your faithfulness time and again. We reaffirm our love for you because you have never let us go. We thank you that you are not distant from us, but have drawn near, in your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He has shared our life, tasted our death and defeated it; He understands our worries and our fears. Help us to respond as your children now.

We pray for this pandemic spreading across our world, remembering all who have lost loved ones and praying for those seriously ill at this time. We uphold the National Health Service as it responds to this added pressure on its already overstretched services. We pray for doctors and nurses and all in the caring professions, who work to help and support people as best they can.

We remember those working behind the scenes testing samples, confirming results, giving information to patients. We uphold others trying to understand this virus better working to create an effective remedy.

We pray for our Governments in Westminster and Holyrood, as they work with the best medical advice to guide us on how we should respond and what action

we should take. We pray that these guidelines might be taken seriously and that all would put them into action.

May this crisis bring out the best in us, not the worst. Help us to live by faith and not by fear; to build bridges not barriers and to resist all who would speak ill of any other group. May we not forget our responsibility to one another, not least to the vulnerable and voiceless in our communities.

Help us to find ways of keeping in touch and offering reassurance to those with underlying health issues; for any who feel particularly vulnerable or in danger at present. As the virus spreads, we pray for the disruption it causes to normal life, bringing new fears and anxieties. We pray for those who have been laid off as their work disappears; for financial hardship for individuals and businesses; for the impact on the economy and pensions, when austerity has already left its mark.

We pray for those whose trips, both for business and pleasure, have been cancelled; and others where events, long anticipated and planned for, have been postponed; for those making contingency planning for home-based work or childcare or exams. May our inconvenience not blind us to others' loss. We remember those who cannot visit loved ones in locked-down care homes and for the elderly whose social contacts have been severely curtailed. Help us to find creative ways of keeping in touch, of assuring them they are not forgotten or ignored.

May congregations find new ways of living though this time. May we not forget our faith but draw strength from it. So may our worship be heartfelt, our fellowship deepen and our service increase.

God of grace and mercy, hear our prayers at this time. Strengthen us, by your Spirit so that we may carry on our lives as best as we are able, looking out for others, showing love in action, being faithful in prayer, and bringing encouragement, hope and peace; always trusting in you, our Rock and our Redeemer. These prayers we bring to you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Final prayer/ benediction

**God, stay beside us:
along the deep valleys of the world,
through the dark hillsides of the world,
beside the still waters
walk with us, lead us, show us
and be our companion
for we are ever your people,
this day and always. Amen.**

God is good ...
all the time...