

# St Nicholas Church, Sighthill

## 17 September 2023



**"Never again shall they feel hunger or thirst; because the Lamb who is at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd and will guide them to springs of the water of life."**

**Revelation 7:16, 17**

### **Responsive call to worship (from Psalm 145)**

Leader: The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**All: The Lord is good to all, and His compassion is over all that He has made.**

Leader: The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.

**All: My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless His holy name for ever and ever.**

Leader: Almighty God, Your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry with the bread of His life and the word of His kingdom. Renew Your people with Your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by the true and living bread, Jesus Christ Your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Confident in the righteousness of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, let's lift up our heads to worship the Lord, our God.

**Hymn: Great is thy faithfulness**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwHZGvJXcQ0&t=17s>

### **Opening Prayer:**

Gracious God, creator of all that we perceive, we join today in the abundance of Your love, in community, in the joy that comes through Your love; through the nourishment of Jesus, our shepherd and our guide, the one who feeds us in mind and in body; through the sustenance of the Spirit, and the knowledge that You are with us as we face the highs and lows, the struggles and joys of this life.

Ever-present God, strengthen us today in faith as we each struggle, hope, and pray for the steadfastness to follow You in these difficult times. When the world is hungry for Your presence, is in need of Your care, is crying out for Your love, where spreading Your word

and your mission is harder, yet ever more necessary, guide us, God of abundance, we pray.

Merciful God, forgive us in Your abundant compassion, love, and grace, though we each strive to live up to Your commands we often fail, so renew within us the reassurance that through every time of trial, through every time we fall, You hold us in the palm of Your hand; supporting, strengthening, and loving always. Forgive us, merciful God, for all that we bring to You now:

Silence...

Out of an abundance of grace, love, and mercy, God forgives you. Accept the peace that this brings in hope and faith.

Silence

Guide us today and every day, as we seek to do Your will in this ever-changing world. Open our eyes to great variety of blessings and opportunities which You have poured out on us. Make us aware of the pain of others, drive out our own sense of helplessness. Free our minds to love and be loved. In Jesus' name and for His sake, we pray, Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Bible Reading 1 - Isaiah 55:1-5 An Invitation to Abundant Life**

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

**Hymn: Praise my soul the King of Glory**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP8aoIMJc7M>

### **Bible Reading 2 - Matthew 14:13-21 Feeding the Five Thousand**

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five

loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

## Reflection

### Offerings/song: Just as I am

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0XjqRZ9W 8>

## Prayers for offerings and intercession

Loving God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we come before You in awe, searching and seeking, doubting and hoping, trying to follow You, to understand You, to know You. As we gather, hearts and minds turned toward heaven and the abundance of love, grace, and joy to be found in our Saviour, we pray:

We pray for our country and all those who call it home, especially those who have been forced to come here through violence, strife, economic hardship, or some other reason. Help us, God of abundant, unimaginable love, to be a neighbour to all, to see the humanity of our sisters and brothers before we see labels, nationalities, skin colour, sexuality, or gender.

We pray for our world, which continues to be ravaged by disease and war, while still struggling with age-old problems of poverty, isolation, and fear. In particular, we pray for all who know the pangs of hunger, who fear for what tomorrow brings, who go without to help others. We pray for those who staff, support and use foodbanks and charities which attempt to alleviate poverty. Help us to remember even on His most difficult days, Jesus gave all He had to nourish others, and give us the boldness to follow His example in whatever way we can.

We pray for Your Church, all over the world, and here, at home, as we continue to discern its place in this world, as we continue to seek to do Your will in this difficult time for this and all churches. Help all those who try, God of abundance, to work and to decide the path forward based on the good of Your people, the furthering of Your mission and the coming of Your kingdom.

We pray for ourselves, all those gathered here, that we may have our hearts and minds turned ever towards heaven, towards our neighbour and towards You, abundant God, our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sustainer. Hear all our prayers said and unsaid as we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

### Closing hymn: To God be the glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMrZO1PZbU4&t=53s>

## Final blessing

Into a world of plenty, we go to speak charity,  
Into a world of pain, we go to speak healing,  
Into a world of hunger, we go to feed,  
Into a world of need, we go to bring the good  
news and abundance of our Saviour,  
so we go now, we go with Christ in us, Christ  
with us, Christ beside us, Christ ahead of us and  
Christ behind us.

And as we go, May the grace...