

# ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, SIGHTHILL

## 18 JULY 2021

This Sunday, ahead of restrictions easing across Scotland tomorrow, Christians across the country – and further afield – will join together in this prayer and reflection in response to the pandemic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2UtNFKgViv&t=1s>

Song: There is a love that seeks us

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n80-sj\\_kPg4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n80-sj_kPg4)

COMPASSION

THE LORD'S PRAYER  
Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our debts, as we  
also have forgiven our  
debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Yours is the kingdom and  
the power and the glory  
forever.  
Amen

### Call to worship and opening Prayer

God of wholeness, we bring to you all within us that needs healing: that which is visible and that which is hidden; that which we have shared with others and that known only to you. Stretch out your healing hands and give us the courage to believe that you can use our weakness and our strength in your service, and that it is never too late to begin again

Leader: Where shall we find you, O God?

**All: We shall find you dancing through the mountains that stretch high and wide across our planet.**

Leader: Where shall we find you, O God?

**All: We shall find you flowing through the rivers as they wind their way to the vast blue oceans.**

Leader: Where shall we find you, O God?

**All: We shall find you here - here among the people of faith who give your justice a home in their living.**

Leader: Where shall we find you, O God?

**All: We shall find you here and we worship you.**

Steadfast God, you deserve all our devotion and trust. You bind yourself to promises that defy our imagination, but guarantee us a part in your providential care of all creation. You see to the heart of every matter, touching needs visible and invisible, summoning old and young, revered and outcast to wholeness of life. You see to the core of our hearts, challenging us when we use shallow rituals as a smokescreen to hide our selfish indifference to the needs of others. But even the transience of our faltering love does not discourage your devotion to us. So, in this time of worship when we remember your constant love for us, we offer you our praise and thanks, bringing with them our hope that by your power we might grow in the faith that gives glory to you. Through Christ our healer and shepherd, Amen.

### Bible Readings

#### Feeding the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-34)

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

#### Healing the Sick in Gennesaret Mark 6: 53-56)

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

### Reflection – 'and he had compassion for them'

These verses of Mark's gospel serve as a bookend for a "bread miracle" in which Jesus feeds five thousand people (vv. 35-44) and the episode that immediately follows in which Jesus walks on the sea (vv. 47-52).

Mark writes, in his account, about a crowd that follows Jesus everywhere He and His disciples go. The crowd gets bigger in size and watches everything that happens to Jesus. The crowd, which we know, will turn against Him at the end, but for now they need Jesus and they flock to Him.

This crowd teaches us something special today because the two parts of the reading show us different parts of the crowd. The first are Jewish people, living in the area where the disciples have been out and about, healing, anointing people and casting out demons. Our reading tells us that they recognise Jesus AND the disciples. The crowd knows where they are going and so get there first. These are people who have experienced the wholeness offered by God and are desperate for more; sheep without a shepherd. So, Jesus begins to teach them.

The second crowd is on the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee. Gennesarat was a Gentile town, deep within Gentile territory. Mark tells in chapter 5 that Jesus has already performed one miracle there and that news has spread. Our reading tells us that these people recognise Jesus NOT the disciples. They are not prepared but they rush to get the people who need healing and wherever Jesus goes they lay the sick in front of him. They are at the start of a journey of faith.

Mark shows us that, before the deep teaching of God can begin, the crowd needs to be in the place where they are ready to hear that teaching. What comes first is the experience of God either through sight, testimony from other people, or a brief touch, like the fringe of a cloak, which brings the potential of healing to an area of life.

The disciples begin this passage as apostles, because they have helped people to reach that stage. This is our calling too, to live the healing love of God in our world so that others find themselves in a place where they can meet the shepherd. It is my hope and indeed prayer that we:

- walk with others when they are weary,
- be still with those who need rest,
- and be strong in the knowledge we cherish - empowered and cared for by Jesus the good shepherd, today and always.
- Lastly, may...

#### Hymn 654 Singing the Faith

The love of God comes close where stands an open door, to let the stranger in, to mingle rich and poor. The love of God is here to stay, embracing those who walk his Way.

The grace of God comes close to those whose grace is spent, when hearts are tired or sore and hope is bruised and bent. The grace of God is here to stay, embracing those who walk his way;

The peace of God comes close to those caught in the storm, forgoing lives of ease to ease the lives forlorn. The peace of God is here to stay, embracing those who walk his Way.

The Son of God comes close where people praise his name, where bread and wine are blest and shared as when he came. The Son of God is here to stay, embracing those who walk his way;

#### 'Beside Us' – Song/ first for others

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0A3kQSeDNM&t=99s>

#### Second prayer for others (using the Gospel passage)

Let us ask God for rest for the weary ...  
We pray for those who are sick and weighed down in body or spirit, for those who are overworked, for those who need a break, for those who near the end of life. May they know Your peace.

Let us ask God to guide those who are lost or perplexed. We pray for all who need shepherding, and for those who teach and guide others, in their work, in their home, in their voluntary service. May they give and receive Your peace.

Let us ask God to provide for the hungry ...  
We pray for all who hunger and thirst, for relief organisations, for the governments of the world, for those who rule in our Island state. May they find peace, create peace, work for peace.

Let us ask God to open places for good news ...  
We pray for people who do not know how much You love them, and for all who share the gospel. May Your Spirit break down barriers, open hearts, bring peace.

Let us ask God to hear the prayers of our own minds and hearts. These and all our prayers we ask in the name of Jesus, Amen.

#### Closing hymn: Glory be to God the Father St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikH8DfDADxc&t=10s>

#### Final blessings

**Friends, we go in peace and in power of Christ our healer, Saviour, Master and friend. May we find all sorts of surprising ways to serve God and our neighbour, that all may know Christ the Lord of all. May Jesus Christ the...**



**Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
Give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.**