

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH,
SIGHTHILL

25 JULY 2021

TIME TO SAY,
ASANTE SANA

CHURCH
- OPEN -
ALL
WELCOME

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed
be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on
earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our
debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver
us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and
the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Matthew 6: 9-13 (NKJV)

Call to prayer

God is near to all who call on him. He listens
when we pray. So let's bring our prayers to
God with confidence, knowing that He will
hear and answer

(Psalm 145: 14, 18)

**All: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,
for His steadfast love endures forever.**

**Give thanks to the God of gods,
For His steadfast love endures forever.**

**Give thanks to the Lord of Lords,
For His steadfast love endures forever**

(Ps. 139:1-3)

Hymn: "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oW-XPE-zec>

Opening Prayer

Lord of all life, beginning and end, provider of food and
drink, clothing and warmth, love and hope, life in all its
fullness. We praise You. You are the one who sustains us,
the one who nourishes and strengthens us throughout
our daily lives. we praise You.

When the journey is long and we hunger and
thirst, Bread of Life, You sustain us. When the road is hard
and our bodies weak Bread of Life, You heal us. When our
spirits are low and we can't carry on Bread of Life, You
revive us. When we offer our hand in love and in service,
Bread of life, You bless us. When the challenge is great
and the workers are few, Bread of Life, You empower us.
When the victory is won and we see Your face, Bread of
Life, You will rejoice with us. We praise You

Open our eyes to You, O God... May Your Holy
Spirit reinvigorate us. May we rub our eyes and focus on
what You call us to do this day and every day. Open our
eyes, open our hearts, open our mouths, and open our
minds - we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

**CHILDREN'S CHURCH - I AM THANKFUL.
I CAST MY BURDENS UNTO JESUS. I WON'T
WORRY, WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECtrMo-QcME&t=190s>

Psalm 105:1-11;

O give thanks to the Lord, call on His name, make known
His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing praises to
Him; tell of all His wonderful works. Glory in His holy
name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence
continually. Remember the wonderful works He has
done, His miracles, and the judgements He has uttered,
O offspring of His servant Abraham, children of Jacob, His
chosen ones. He is the Lord our God; His judgements are
in all the earth. He is mindful of His covenant for ever, of
the word that He commanded, for a thousand
generations, the covenant that He made with Abraham,
His sworn promise to Isaac, which He confirmed to Jacob
as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying,
'to you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for
an inheritance.'

Brief Reflection – 'Our Church is open -all are welcome'

Our scripture reading reminds us, especially at this
time, to always be thankful – to give thanks to God for
His love, care and faithfulness. But although we have
many things to be grateful and thankful for (**including
(1) the easing of lockdown restrictions and (2) the
reopening of our church for worship**), we still spend
more time complaining. We complain regularly for
example, about bad weather, nuisance phone calls,
door-to-door salespeople, Wi-Fi not connecting, noisy
eaters, noisy neighbours, people pushing into queues,
supermarket self-service tills, bad customer service,
lack of funding for NHS, bad hair day and having a runny
nose. This reminds me of this 'prayer' I shared with you,
last year:

*Dear Lord, so far today I've done all right. I
haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper, I
haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or
over-indulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in
a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed,
and from then on, I'm probably going to need a
lot of help. Amen.*

The psalmist urges us not to focus on worries, burdens or fears, but on God's faithfulness. Part of this psalm of David was evidently used as a hymn of praise, during the momentous occasion of the carrying of the Ark of Covenant from the house of Obed-edom (where David had temporarily kept it), back to Jerusalem (1 Chr. 16:7-22).

The Ark of the Covenant (*aka* Ark of God) was a symbol of the presence of God in the nation of Israel.

So, on its return, David and the people of Israel found it fitting to proclaim aloud the greatness of God and to give thanks to a God who is 'gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love' (Psalm 145:8). They used this time well to remember God and to thank Him for taking good care of them, in good and difficult times.

The words "thank," "thanks" and "thanksgiving" are used many times in the Bible. In the King James Version (KJV), these three words are used 128 times. We read five times in the Bible about Jesus' giving thanks to His Father. Also, Apostle Paul often gave thanks to God. For example, in 1 Corinthians 15:57, he said, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And in Philippians 4:6, Paul again asks us to "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, [to let our] requests be made known to God" (emphasis mine). So, it is good to be thankful to God – all the time.

Friends, I know very well that it is easy to be thankful to God during good times, when He blesses us with a new car, a house or His healing mercies. I also know that many find it very difficult, especially during times of trouble, pain, loss and uncertainty, to express our thankfulness to God, in word and through action.

I read a touching story of a church leader who, after going through a tough time, struggled to say 'thank you' to God for His faithfulness to him and his family, over the years. He wrote,

Every time I knelt down on my knees to thank God for His many blessings, I instead found myself asking, "Yeah, but what have you done for me lately? Then God's Spirit led me gently to re-read Psalm 105:5. I obeyed, but I got strangely stuck on the first word of this verse – Remember". I now know that God wanted me to remember; to remember with tremendous gratitude the many wonderful things He had said and done in and through my life, family and work, even lately. He also helped me to remember, again with tremendous thankfulness, that the same God who promised to be mindful of the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - to give the land of Canaan to the nation of Israel (vs 8-11) – had also honoured His promise to send His son, Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us.

The man of God continued,

thanks be to God, 'whose divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence (2Peter 1:3).

May Grace and peace be multiplied to us through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2 Peter 1:2). And for all God's many blessings; for all His continued love, care and friendship – during good and difficult times - we say, Thank You. Amen

Prayer of thanksgiving and intercession

Holy and Faithful God, we give thanks for the blessing of memory, and for the way our memory of God's blessing and guidance has helped us in the past, especially when we have struggled with doubts and fears invading our hearts and minds.

Lord God, we give thanks for the way our forebears in the faith trusted you. They were never disappointed in your guidance, mercy and care. You led and blessed the people you chose be your family; and through thick and thin, you've always been there for them, especially in their times of doubt and fear, and eventually led them to their new home, as you promised. We give thanks that you have blessed and led countless generations through their faith journeys, and we especially give thanks for the people who have prayed for and blessed us throughout our life.

Holy God of Shalom, it is your will that people to know the security and joy of your Shalom - where they can be at peace with themselves, with their world, and especially with you. We give thanks that we too have this gift of your Shalom.

Help us to take the time to be still before you, to receive all the blessings you want to shower upon us – again just as you promised - and to be at home with us so that our whole being is blessed as we live our lives as your true children of grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Closing Hymn: Now thank we all our God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=30&v=Y0dmfmwFLn0&feature=emb_logo

Final blessings

We go now, to be nourished in the love of God; to be generous in the way of Christ Jesus and to be filled and fuelled by the living Spirit.

And may the blessing of all three, Creator, Saviour and Life-Force be with you and those you love today and always. Amen