

*He maketh me to lie down in
green pastures!* Psalm 23:2

St Nicholas Church, Sighthill
16th August 2020

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

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us today
our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory
are yours.
Now and for ever. Amen*

Opening Hymn: Psalm 23 (The Lord's my Shepherd) New Scottish Hymns

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

Opening Prayer

"Thank you, Father, for only choosing the best pastures for me to lie in. Thank You that You know the best spots for fresh and tender food. I will follow You into the places that You lead me.

I'm so grateful that You know when and where I need to eat and fill back up again."

Melanie Redd

Rest and Refreshment

Almighty God, sometimes we grow weary of the demands of the world, of the physical efforts or our tasks and the challenging relationships involved. You offer us a haven, a place where we can relieve this burden; a resting place where we can recover, where we can renew our strengths – like eagles. Lord, let us rest in this green pasture and awake as new, strengthened and happy people. Let us leave in this pasture all the grudges, the confusion, the helplessness. Let us rise above these things as your son and our Lord and Saviour rose from the grave: new, transformed, redeemed, victorious. In Jesus' name, Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer by Silva Volcic)

Psalm 23: 1-2;

The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.
He makes me lie down in green pastures

Ezekiel 34: 14-15;

I will feed them in good pasture, and the lofty mountains of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in a good grazing land; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will tend My flock and make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD.

Revelation 7:17

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them...

Hymn: The Good Shepherd by Fernando Ortega.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=361OpSxEs6M>



Reflection: 'He makes me lie down in green pastures' (Psalm 23: 2) – copied with permission from Rev Donald Thomson's book, 'Reflections on the 23rd Psalm'.

A sheep that lies down is one that has no troubles; it is well fed and free from worries. A troubled sheep will never lie down.

One that is constantly on the move is worried about something – the faint smell or sound of a predator, an illness or wound. Sheep have an instinct of self-preservation that domestication has been unable to eliminate. One of the problems they face is that they fall on their side or back and cannot get up again. A predator just needs to knock one over in order to incapacitate it.

Green pastures? What is so special about that?

The country my wife and I have visited most on holiday is Spain. We lived there for a couple of years in the mid eighties, and have now visited every province on holiday. Wherever we go on holiday, we buy at least one picture book of the area.

I have a picture book of Israel. It has been used on occasions during small Bible studies to illustrate points I am trying to make. It has two double-page spreads of aerial photos. The first is of the wilderness between Jerusalem and The Dead Sea. The second is of the Valley of Jezreel. The former is arid and dry with no man-made features except the road that winds its way through the area. The latter is a riot of colours, and cultivation of many kinds. Imagine hundreds of market gardens, all together in one place. The pictures are used as an illustration of the difference water makes to the land.

Here in Scotland there is an abundance of rainwater. Whenever Spanish friends visit us here, the one comment they all make is about how green the scenery is, even in summertime. In Spain, the perpetually green fields we take for granted exist only on the Biscay coast, the Pyrenees Mountains and in a few other places.

In the Holy Land, green pastures are beyond the wildest imagination of the shepherds. They are the stuff of dreams. If they could graze their sheep on green pastures, they would be better nourished, and become fatter and healthier. There would be no limit to what the shepherd would do to find such a marvellous place.

That is the point the Psalmist is making. God wants the very best for His sheep. He wants to provide the very best pasture, so that the sheep can eat to their fill, and then lie down.

If only the sheep could only fill their stomachs instead of walking around from dawn to dusk in poor pastures, they would have no need to spend their whole lives in a constant search for nourishment.

(To be continued – next Sunday)

Prayers for others

Loving Father,
you are exalted among the nations.
Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have confidence that you will lead us to green pastures - where we can lie down in peace.

We pray today for all who are worried, for all who fear the future, asking that you would lead them to that place of peace and security.

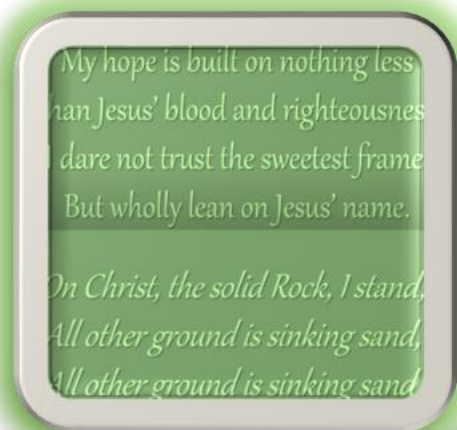
Calm our spirits Lord.

- For the children, teachers and other staff in schools – provide protection
- For our church and civic leaders – bring direction, wisdom and inspiration
- For the mom fighting fear for her children — bring courage and peace.
- For the one whose family is severed — bring unity.
- For the husband who has strayed — bring forgiveness and restoration.
- For the cancer bringing destruction and death — bring deliverance and healing.
- For the empty bank account — bring provision.

Lord, You are our everything. We are in this world, but not of it. This world does not dictate who we are, You do. We are Yours, heir to Your kingdom. In You, we find peace. In You, we find rest. In You, we find provision. And in You, we find healing. We choose You. Blessed be Your holy Name! In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen

**Closing Hymn: My hope is built on nothing less
(Grace Community Church)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2iPVdl_Bh8



Final blessings

The Good Shepherd leads us forward, from this place, into the world to serve God's people, to witness to God's love in all that we do. We go in peace and God's peace goes with us. Amen

