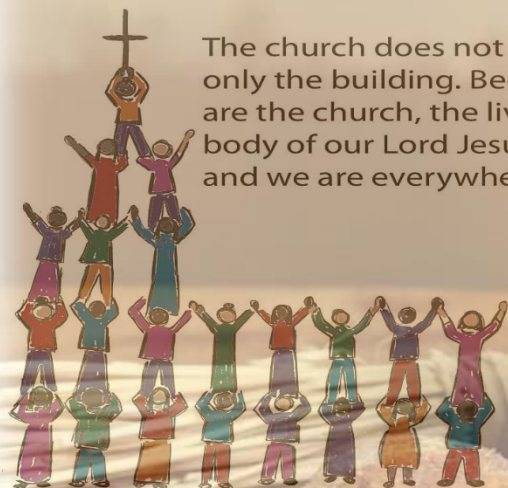


St Nicholas Church, Sighthill

Holy Communion Service

31st January 2021



The church does not close, only the building. Because we are the church, the living body of our Lord Jesus and we are everywhere.

God is good, all the time

Communion Song: 'Come to the feast'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8O_PwPIKA

Sharing communion whilst scattered

Invitation and prayer

Leader: Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! We have come from the East and West, North and South to eat at the Lord's table. Come, you who hunger, filled with wanting and waiting. Come, you who thirst for the peace of Christ.

All: Come to the table of the Lord.

Leader: Come, not because you are worthy to sit at Christ's table. Come because you are willing to serve at Christ's side.

All: Come to the table of the Lord.

Leader: For the Lord our God has gathered us here and Jesus the Christ is our Host. Come, you who are blessed. Come, you who are broken. Come to the table of the Lord.

Leader: Rev 3:20 says, 'Listen, I am standing at the door knocking. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and eat with you and you with me. This meal is not my idea or that of the church. It was initiated by Jesus Christ Himself. It is for all who love Jesus or for all who want to love Him more. So, come if you have much or if you have little. Come, if your faith is strong or if, especially during this time, you feel your faith is weak.

Come, if you have been here often, or if you have not been here for a long time. Come, if you have tried to follow Jesus, and come if you feel you have failed. Come, not because it is your minister or friend that invites you to this table, but because Jesus Himself invites you. It is His will that those who seek Him should find Him here.

All: Lord God, we come to this, the Lord's table, bringing ourselves, families, friends communities to you. We come asking for your forgiveness where we have failed you, our families and friends. We come asking for your help and strength to serve you, your people and creation well, with and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray together with our eyes open, and when I raise my hand, kindly join me to say:

'these we lay down'.

Leader: Let's practice [gesture], **'these we lay down'.**

Leader: Before we take the body of the Lord, before we share his life in bread and wine, we recognize those things we carry within us for which we are sorry [gesture] **'these we lay down'.**

Leader: The words of hope we often failed to give, the prayers of kindness buried in our pride, the signs of care we argued out of sight [gesture] **'these we lay down'.**

Leader: Our narrowness of vision and of mind, our need for other folk to serve our will, and every word and silence meant to hurt [gesture] **'these we lay down'**

Leader: Of those around in whom we meet our Lord, we ask their pardon and we grant them ours; every contradiction to Christ's peace [gesture] **'these we lay down'**

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, companion at this feast, we empty now our hearts and stretch our hands, and ask you to meet us here in bread and wine which you lay down, Amen.

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)

Jesus said, 'Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' (John 6:47-51)

All: We are the people of God. We are the body of Christ. We are scattered, and the body of Christ is broken, but as we gather, the body of Christ is re-membered.

Leader: A short Christian Creed (together)

**All: We believe in God, the Creator!
Maker of everything,
Author of the Universe,
And Mystery behind every matter.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ!
God from God, Light from Light,
true God and true human,
One with the Creator.
He is the Word made flesh and the Saviour
of all creation!**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit!
Breath of God moving among us,
One with the Creator and one with Christ,
He is our Guide and the Mentor of all creation!**

John W: Together we gather in obedience to Jesus' command, to remember, and to share together in breaking bread and drinking wine, in remembrance of the death of Christ. Each piece of bread that we eat was once scattered across the fields, and the grain that God gave to grow has become for us the bread of life. Each sip of wine that we drink was once many vines, and the grapes that God gave to grow have become for us the new wine of God's kingdom.

In our communion with one another, we are fed with the bread of heaven that sustains us, and we drink the wine of gladness that brings us joy. The people of Israel were sustained by God through their years of wilderness wandering: 'The Israelites ate manna for forty years, until they came to a habitable land; they ate manna, until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.' (Exodus 16.35) '[God] rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven.' (Psalm 78.24). And we too are God's people, sustained by God through the wilderness of this world.

Jesus said to His disciples: 'Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Then Jesus said to them, "very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to Him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. "' (John 6.31-35)

Tom K: On the night of His arrest, Jesus took bread, and after He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body. It is for you'. Do this to remember me.' In the same way, after the supper He took the cup and said, 'This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Drink from it, all of you, to remember me'. So now, following Jesus' example and command, we take this bread and this wine, the ordinary things of the world which Christ will make special.

We eat and we drink together and, as Stuart Townend reminds us in his beautiful communion song, 'we share in the bread of life and drink of His sacrifice – as a sign of our bonds of peace, around the table of the King'.

Song: Behold the Lamb

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aecG01Ky9wE>

Let us share in bread together.

Jesus said, 'This is my body broken for you'.

I now invite you where you are to break, share or eat bread (or what ever you've got to hand. Eat recognising that Jesus, the Saviour of the world died for you. His body was broken so that you might know freedom, healing and peace in your life.

Let us share in wine together

After supper Jesus took the cup 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood', He said.

We remember that Jesus will come again. And so, as we drink together now, where you are – where I am, we remember that Jesus is alive and the hope that we have is that He will come again. Our hearts cry is Maranatha! Come Lord, back to this needy world. And so, together, we drink.

Prayer after communion and prayers for others

Heather S: We give thanks, Loving God, that You have refreshed us at Your table. Strengthen our faith; increase our love for you and one another. As we have been fed by the seed that became grain, and then became bread, may we go out into the world to plant seeds of justice, transformation, and hope. From where You are to where You need us, Jesus, now lead on. From the security of what we know to the adventure You will reveal to us. Jesus, now lead on. To refashion the fabric of this world until it resembles the shape of Your Kingdom, Jesus, now lead on. From the known to the unknown, from the normal to the new normal – Jesus, now lead on.

Sharing peace

We cannot share the peace of Christ together as we do during our gathered Holy Communion service.

But I now invite you, where you are, to say a prayer of peace over those whom you know and love – those in your church family that you can't be amongst us now or those that are your friends and family around and about you. Ask God, in a silent prayer, to protect them and bless them with His peace.

The peace of Christ be with you.

Let share peace or ask God to bless our family and friends with His peace.



**Closing Song: Because He Lives...
(by Harvest Virtual Choir)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI0ifzwwVNY>

Final blessings

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever, Amen

