

4th October, 2026

The paper-version Service



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks
Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

The love of God is greater far
than tongue or pen can ever tell;
it goes beyond the highest star,
and reaches to the lowest hell.
The wandering child is reconciled
by God's beloved Son.
The aching soul again made whole,
and priceless pardon won.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.

When ancient time shall pass away,
and human thrones and kingdoms fall;
when those who here refuse to pray
on rocks and hills and mountains call;
God's love so sure, shall still endure,
all measureless and strong;
grace will resound the whole earth

round—
the saints' and angels' song.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
and were the skies of parchment made;
were every stalk on earth a quill,
and everyone a scribe by trade;
to write the love of God above
would drain the ocean dry;
nor could the scroll contain the whole,
though stretched from sky to sky.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15 & John 6: 25-35 – Satisfying Hungers

What's your reaction when you're approached by a marketeer or salesperson, either walking down the street or knocking on your door. You're probably cautious, perhaps cynical, wondering what they're after, what are they offering – and I'm having already decided, 'I'm pretty sure I don't want it.' And, 'how do I get away.'

In this account of Jesus, people have come to him, but he launches into a sales pitch. I wonder what the people thought, 'Oh no what's this going to cost?' But Jesus isn't selling, he's giving. 'Surely there's a catch.' I was once rung and told I'd won tickets to a football match – it took ages for the caller to convince me that it was in fact true!

Jesus is making an offer – and it's true! Jesus is offering satisfaction for all our appetites. He says, *'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'* And, this is a gift that's free to us! It comes at a great cost, as we will see, but we are not charged. It is a free gift, but it will be life changing.

Whatever we eat, we're hungry again. Sometimes we might eat so much that we say, 'I'm never going to eat again,' but we do. And, whatever we drink, we're thirsty again. Jesus says: *'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'*

God cares about our physical needs, it's why he taught us to pray, 'Give us today our daily bread' – and he performs miracles to feed people, the 5,000 for example. But he also encouraged us to look beyond the physical – which is usually where we start – and to seek something more fundamental. (Read Matthew 6:19-34)

The four recognised human psychological needs are love, security, significance and purpose. To have a chance of flourishing we need these needs satisfied. Whether we are in crises or not, we are certainly in a challenging time for mental health. The way God meets our psychological needs is truly beautiful – his love is amazing, his security is unshakeable, he

grants us extraordinary significance, and gives us meaningful and inspiring purpose.

Our reading from John 6 is not the first time he's spoken of satisfying needs. He meets a woman in Samaria, as told in John 4:1-26. This woman comes across as able to hold her own in an argument, and self-reliant, but she had so little. Jesus asks her for what she has – a drink from her bucket with which she was collecting water from a well. Jesus' request was culturally remarkable. Jews, would not talk to a Samaritan, and men would not talk to women, let alone ask for and share a drink! But Jesus offers her extraordinary respect and value – the need, the hunger she had in abundance. Jesus satisfies her heart and soul.

Augustine prayed, acknowledging, 'Our hearts are restless til they find there rest in you.' We long for a happily ever after, for ourselves and the world, but this world is broken, but Jesus is fixing it and us, not just for now, but forever. God provides a place for the refreshment and restoration of our souls (read Psalm 23).

So, what are we to do? Receive. Read Psalm 34:8, and Isaiah 55:1-2. It cost Jesus dearly upon the cross but the gift is for you. Will you receive and not miss out? Read John 6:35 and Jeremiah 2:13.

We are invited to join in with God, and our natural response is thankfulness. We recognise the gift, we will want to develop an attitude of gratitude. Gratitude and thanks for our daily bread – including today's Harvest. Gratitude and thanks for our very breath – we owe God for our lives! Gratitude and thanks for our children, our health, wealth, for everything! Don't live in debt, acknowledge the giver.

And, share, respond in generosity to God and others. Freely you have received, freely give. (see Matthew 10:8). God has invested all in for you on the cross. Sow, invest, if you want to reap. (2 Corinthians 9) and join in with the Kingdom of Heaven – Matthew 6:33.

18th Sunday after Trinity: Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: 21st October at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 28th October at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>