

# 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2025

## 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:**

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow  
strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Saviour,  
And life more abundant and free!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow  
strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

Through death into life everlasting,  
He passed, and we follow Him there;

O'er us sin no more hath dominion-  
For more than conquerors we are!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow  
strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

His Word shall not fail you--He  
promised;  
Believe Him, and all will be well:  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow  
strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

## **The Sermon by Timothy James.**

### **Read Revelation 14.14-18 and John 6:25-35 – Harvest.**

Food matters to all of us, so it comes up in many ways in the Bible, often literally, but sometimes as an image, as in our two passages today.

Today we celebrate Harvest. First, we should remember the literal meaning, which is what the Bible means on 90% of occasions when it uses the word “harvest”. Today, we give thanks to God for the abundant food that he provides us. Harvest is about thanks to God for his provision from the earth for our bodily needs. If we need a reminder of why this is important, we can look at our partner diocese in Karamoja, where they are literally praying for rain so that there will be enough food. If there is no harvest, the subsistence farmer and his children starve. We give thanks to God for the physical provision he has abundantly provided in answer our regular prayer “Give us this day our daily bread”. We should never let our *#FirstWorldproblems* make us miss this literal meaning.

However, that is not the only way the Bible talks about food and harvest. Our Gospel reading makes that clear. John has recounted the “sign” of the feeding of the 5000. Jesus moves from talking about “the food that perishes” (v.21), the physical food that we need to stay alive, to “the bread of God, which gives life to the world” (v.33). We should work for “the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give [us]” (v.27). If we satisfy ourselves with God's material provision, then we miss his better provision. Not to miss out on it, we must “believe in him whom he has sent” (v.29).

Let's go back from eating to harvest: in John's vision in Revelation 14, at the climax of the warfare between heaven and hell, we see two sickles and two harvests. The first is the sickle in the hand of the Son of Man, who reaps the harvest of the earth, now fully ripe (clearly a reference to the wheat harvest). Then we see the Angel reap the grape harvest. It is quite clear that this is a **harvest of judgment**.

This is consistent with the way the Bible talks about harvests. In the relatively few Old Testament passages which use the picture of harvest as something other than the literal agricultural harvest, the prophets use it as a metaphor for God's judgment on evil and on evil people (an example is Joel 3:13). This is the harvest of God's wrath, and John's vision of the angel reaping the grapes is built on this metaphor.

In the New Testament, however, another harvest is also emphasised. It starts with Jesus' command to his followers (Matt. 9:37-38, Lk. 10:2, John 4:31-38) to ask his Father, as the Lord of the Harvest, to send labourers into his harvest. This is not the harvest of wrath but a **harvest of salvation**.

The harvest is always a moment of truth: what is planted bears its fruit.

1. Our sowing (e.g. Hosea 10:12 *"Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love"*)

What I sow today (in conduct, words, generosity) will bear fruit. God calls me to sow righteousness and mercy in the present, because these seeds will ripen in the future. This is what Paul and James mean when they talk about "a harvest of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11, Jas. 3:18).

2. Final harvest (Revelation 14)

What is hidden becomes visible: the unveiling of what has really been growing in us all along. My choices, actions, and allegiances matter. The harvest is coming; lives are ripening now for judgment or salvation.

3. The true bread (John 6)

But above all else, I need to receive and believe in Jesus. The deepest hunger is not for bread or harvest but for him. It is Christ who is life, not my "good deeds."

4. Labourers in the harvest (John 4)

I am not just a passive crop but also a worker. I share in God's work of gathering people for eternal life. My calling is to see the fields as "white for harvest" and to join joyfully in the work.

**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity:** *O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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: October 15<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: October 22<sup>nd</sup> 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>