

Prayers of Intercession:

We come Lord God to You our Sustainer, hungry and thirsty, bringing to You our prayers for Your church, the leaders of our nation and world.

We ask Lord that You give wisdom and integrity to all who advise and lead, awakening in us all a sense of our need for You. Increase our love and compassion, aware that You are always our spiritual sustenance. Eternal Bread of Life, **sustain us**

Lord remind us of those who provide for us, as we prepare our food this week. As we eat, give us thankful hearts for each meal, help us to recall and respond to those less fortunate. We pray Your grace and mercy to fill all feeling fearful and disadvantaged in the current fallout from the pandemic, that they may know Your surrounding presence for the onward journey. Eternal Bread of Life, **sustain us**

Lord we pray for Your touch for all in pain, fearful and worried facing long waits for medical treatment. We pray for Your peace to surround those alone, those grieving, whose hearts ache with feelings of disillusion and despair. Eternal Bread of Life, **sustain us**

Lord we acknowledge our total dependence on You. *We pray for those on our hearts....* We praise You Lord for your provision for us, aware Your blessings daily supply all we need. Asking Lord, to know You more deeply, for You alone sustain us throughout life. Merciful Lord God thank You for hearing all our prayers in Jesus Name, **Amen.**

Hymn: [StF 255 / H&P 139](#) **The kingdom of God is justice and joy**

Benediction Blessing:

Sustaining Lord, Bread of Life, empower us by Your mercy, grant us Your compassion and peace in the days ahead. In You, Lord our Source, we have rest and refuge, whether we are awake or asleep, You are always our stronghold, Your signature on our life is our assurance for our whole journey, **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and for ever, Amen.

Darlington District
Sharing Worship at Home
Sunday 2 August 2020



**Come let us praise the Lord,
let us rejoice in the presence of God
our Loving Sustainer and Redeeming Saviour.**

Psalm: Psalm 17: 1 to 7, 15

Hymn: [StF 443 / H&P 691](#) **Come, let us sing of a wonderful love**

Prayer of Praise, Thanksgiving and Confession:

Lord God, Creator of the heavens and earth, we are scattered in these uncertain times, yet we unite to worship You. We come to You offering our lives with confidence, knowing You are faithful. Aware Lord You love us, and are close to us now and always, and what we face, we never face alone.

Holy Spirit we seek Your enabling that we may give thanks relying on Your mercy and grace, not ourselves. We praise You for Your renewing and empowering presence which is always with us.

Merciful Lord we come reliant on Your faithfulness, aware of our weakness and inadequacy, So we repent of our sins, thoughtlessness and shortcomings seeking Your grace and pardon. Lord we ask You to deepen our trust and faith, as You draw us ever nearer to Yourself.

Loving Redeemer we surrender ourselves to You, aware You accomplish in us more than we can imagine, think or ask. Help us to clearly see Your signature on our lives. Thankful for Your redeeming love and forgiveness of our sins, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Bible reading: [Matthew 14: 13-21](#)

Jesus Feeds a Large Crowd

Hymn: [StF 252 H&P 137](#) Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Bread'

Reflection:

Matthew locates this wonderful event as a pivot point in his narrative between Jesus being informed of the cruel murder of John and the looming brutally stark events in Jerusalem. Thus Matthew begins preparing his readers for the future suffering of Jesus, by establishing without doubt who Jesus is and His compassion for others, within the narrative of a picnic for a very large crowd in a deserted place.

This narrative is one of a few incidents uniquely recorded in all four Gospels. Therefore, as repetition underlines importance, let us pay close attention. Reading, as if for the first time, putting aside our familiarity with the text and visualising the scene, allowing this amazing narrative to transform us. First, understanding the background of this sign. Matthew records the presence of women and children, clarifying a minimum of two thirds of the crowd present that evening who were uncounted. Thereby, more starkly highlighting how pitifully inadequate were the provisions available, which were of the most basic kind, and had been carried around uncooled throughout the heat of that springtime day. Thus underlining forcefully the power of Jesus over all aspects of the material world, as leftovers were collected up.



The people's expectations of the Messiah were that he would provide sustenance for them. Thereby, the dawn of the messianic age, would be marked by the return of the bread from heaven, just as their ancestors experienced during their forty year long desert wanderings on route to the promised land from Egyptian servitude. Jesus' superabundant provision of food in that isolated place makes clear reference to the nation's historic expectations.

Secondly, how often do we reflect on the glory and power of our Lord? We should recall that the eternal realm is a place of extravagant fullness and abundance, beyond anything we may imagine or describe. From eternity's abundance, Jesus made a definitive statement in feeding this crowd, illuminating who He is and underlining His salvation mission. To the crowd it was an unmissable call to decision, would they give full allegiance to Him? Do we, in our assumed familiarity with this Scripture, miss this same call? Our Lord God never changes, what was true then remains true today. Do we

gloss over and forget there is an allegiance call to us from the King of kings and Lord of lords? It is a reminder that we are called to serve with vulnerability, in the footsteps of our Lord. Whilst we can plan in preparation for our hopes and dreams, we do not know the future. The world may seem to offer comfort in image over substance, but these cannot be a substitute for full allegiance to our Lord. In Jesus, our Bread of Life, we see true compassionate witness, sharing salvation, Good News. We too are called to share with all whom we encounter. This year has clearly proved to us, that unexpected times of shadow are inevitable in life. Our onward journey is to be in the light of Scripture and close personal relationship with our Lord whom we are called to fully obey.

Therefore, we should always recall, our Lord is ever faithful and all powerful, so nothing can dislodge us from His care. Shadows are not all dire and can give some insight as to what is coming toward us. Fearing being hit by a passing vehicle, we put aside worries when its shadow travels over us leaving us unaffected. We have no need to stress about looming shadows for our Lord is nearer than our breath. Our only security is in Jesus, whilst dealing with life's shadows, for we are never bereft nor alone. No matter the surrounding new realities which have so changed our lives this year. It is with true joy we receive our Source, King and Lord on to the throne of our hearts, by our total surrender to Jesus, our Bread of Life. We can be fully assured of being deeply loved, which sustains us throughout this life and into eternity.

We have so much more to praise God for than we often recognise. Let us worship thankfully, counting our many daily blessings. Giving all glory to our Eternal Redeeming Lord for such abundant mercy and grace, not allowing distractions to submerge the truth of Scripture.

*My
Grace
is
sufficient
for you*

Yesterday has gone, we cannot change anything in it. Tomorrow never arrives, so nothing can be achieved by worry, or stressing over *what if* and *may be*. Let us determine to avoid distractions which divert us into worry. Recalling, God never changes, nothing and no one can take us out of Jesus' hand. Today is the only time we have, will we be difference makers today?