

# The Gathering

## Welcome - [OLIVER]

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Today, we hear Jesus telling parables about patience and hope—things that may feel stretched at the moment. But the greatest of outcomes can take time—time doing everyday human things while holding onto a vision of something not-so-everyday. Let this moment be a glimpse of something exceptional: the wonderful and surprising ways of God.

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow.

## Collect for Purity - [DIANE]

**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.**

## Confession

[KELVIN] God is love and we are God's children.  
There is no room for fear in love.  
We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

[Silence]

**God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

[OLIVER] God, who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Gloria - [MORVEN]**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

### **Collect - [OLIVER]**

O God, at whose bidding the seed will sprout and the shoot grow towards full stature, hear the prayer of your assembled people. Make us trust in your hidden ways, that we may pray with confidence and wait for your kingdom now growing in our midst.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **Amen**

## The Ministry of the Word

### **OLD TESTAMENT: 1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13 – [MONICA]**

Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeath of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel.

The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons

here?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.’ He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us,  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL: Mark 4:26-34 – [MARC]**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.  
**Glory to Christ our Saviour.**

He also said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.’

He also said, ‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.’

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.  
**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

### **Sermon [KELVIN]**

I wonder whether you've ever tried online dating.

A few years ago I wouldn't even have thought to ask that question in a sermon as my presumption was that it wasn't a terribly mainstream activity.

I have learned though through listening to the hopes and fears of many people and through listening to the stories of those coming to get married that the online dating game has become very central to many people's lives and one of the ways that they think they will find happiness in life.

Given my public profile, it is an activity that is unlikely to work for me so all I know is second hand.

There are apps for this and for that. Apps that will sort your preferences from your peccadillos. Apps that will tell you who is out there. And apps that will tell you who is right here, right now and right ready to mess with your head.

And each works in a different way.

But some of the most common apps out there have a fairly simple premise – they show a picture of available matches and then invite the user to swipe left to reject them or swipe right according to whether or not they are attracted to them.

Left. Right. Left. Right.

Or perhaps just Left. Left. Left. Left. Left.

I find it a curious way of beginning a relationship but I'm aware of no small number of people who would testify to the fact that it has worked for them.

Now, in our first bible reading this morning, we get something that resembles that kind of dating app.

There's no mobiles phones for God to use – just the prophet Samuel, whom God uses to choose the next King of Israel.

And they come before him one by one.

Eliab first.

But Samuel swipes left.

Then Abinadab.

But the answer is no.

Oddly in the middle of all this Samuel says that he's not judging based on appearances. But – well, they all say that, don't they?

Shammah is the next hopeful.

But it isn't to be Shammah.

And one by one all the sons of Jesse come forward. And one by one, Samuel rejects them.

Swipes left.

And we don't see them again.

Until the lovely David appears. Ruddy and handsome and with beautiful eyes.

And funnily enough, the Lord whispers to Samuel that this is the one.

Now, all of this takes place, remember, within the context of trying to find a new king to rule Israel – a project that was against God's best recommendations.

It was the people who wanted a king to rule over them.

Within the narrative experience of the biblical authors, they present a picture of God who really wants the people to have very different leadership indeed.

Sometimes it is priests – holy leaders who mediate the different ways that the people can get in touch with the divine.

Sometimes it is prophets – those who speak truth to whatever situation they are in.

Sometimes it is judges – those who embody wisdom in discerning the way for individuals and communities in disputes and in vocation.

To be honest there's a bit of a beauty parade going on in the bible for political systems, never mind a beauty parade for those who will run them.

Priests running things. The people swipe left.

Judges running things. The people swipe left.

Prophets running things? Well, prophets rarely get to run things and when they do nobody likes it anyway.

In the end the people get fed up.

Just give us a king and tell us what to do.

And that's how we get to Samuel picking a likely candidate from Jesse's sons.

Only when we get to David, the king with the twinkle in his eye do we get someone who satisfies Samuel – God's proxy voter.

The oil of plenty is cracked open and David is anointed mightily.

And it would be nice to say that they all lived happily ever after. Though if we read David's story we'll find it is a lot more interesting, complex, sad and glorious than anyone would guess on the day that he was anointed king by Samuel after all his elder brothers were rejected.

I must admit that I struggle with Samuel's conception of God and with his ideas of what God wants.

I find myself wanting to know more not just about Eliab and Abinadab and Shammah but about the rest of Jesse's children. And not just the boys either.

For this is the God I believe in. A God who values the gifts of all of them.

A God whose love is extravagant. Generous. And broad and deep and wide.

A God who already has a heart that is already matched with our own.

A God who is already interested in us – body and soul. The handsome and the not so handsome. Those who have a twinkle in the eye and those whose eyes are tired, or scared or weary or frightened too.

A God who always swipes right and never swipes left.

A God who says, I don't want you to be alone.

I will be with you through it all.

I have been with you through it all.

A God whose name and whose purpose is love.

You don't need an app. Nor the prophet Samuel anointing your head with oil.

You are already loved. More than you can know.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

### **Intercessions [TAYLOR]**

Holy God, your kingdom is justice and peace and joy. As we come before you today with our prayers, help us to allow your kingdom to flourish in our words and actions in the coming week.

We offer our prayers for all around the world whose lives continue to be impacted by the COVID pandemic, and we ask your blessing and wisdom for medical professionals, vaccine administrators, and policymakers, that their work and decisions may be guided by love and justice.



We especially bring before you those experiencing heightened inequality and oppression during this difficult time, including the peoples of India and Palestine, and refugees and trans communities here in the U.K. We give thanks for those around the world who proclaim your peace and healing in the midst of sickness and violence.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your church throughout the world, remembering especially in our prayers this week the Church of Nigeria. In our own diocese we pray for our Bishop, Kevin, as well as the Church of the Holy Name in Cumbernauld and St Matthew's Possilpark. We pray as well for our own cathedral, St Mary's, and all who minister here. May your church keep alive the fires of Pentecost and preach the good news of your kingdom to all who will hear.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this community of Glasgow, and pray especially this week for businesses recovering from COVID. We give thanks for the spaces in this city that allow people to come together and appreciate each other's company, and that facilitate creativity and the exchange of knowledge and services. As we emerge from lockdown, may we use this opportunity to envision more loving and just relationships with our neighbours and more sustainable stewardship of the resources we have.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring before you now, in the silence of our hearts, the people and situations near to us in need of our prayers, and those whose needs are known only to you. Lord, your Son Jesus taught us that your kingdom is like the mustard seed that puts forth large branches. Help us to serve you even in the smallest of our actions in the coming week, that your kingdom may flourish and grow beyond what we ourselves can anticipate or see.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We offer up to your loving care all those who have died recently, including Esther Brown. We remember also Jeannie Brown and Hector Macleod, whose year's mind is today. We ask your comfort for all those who grieve and remember them. May all the departed rest in peace **and rise in glory.**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## Communion

### Offertory - [OLIVER]

Small things can make a big difference. What may seem like an insignificant gesture of kindness or compassion can wind up providing a considerable place of solace and comfort. That's how this Cathedral came to be. People just like you and me planted small seeds in hope of great growth, and look what happened.

Year upon year, the work of planting, cultivation and harvesting continues. That's how we tend God's Kingdom and that's how this place provides a shelter and sanctuary large enough for all God's children.

To sow your gift into this great canopy, visit [www.thecathedral.org.uk](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk) and click DONATE TO ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL today.

Let us present our offerings to the Lord.

**Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory,  
the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in  
heaven and on earth is yours.**

**All things come from you, and of your own we give you.**

### Eucharistic Prayer - [OLIVER]

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Worship and praise belong to you, Father,  
in every place and at all times.

All power is yours.  
You created the heavens and established the earth;  
you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours  
are brought together in a wonderful exchange.  
He made his home among us  
that we might for ever dwell in you.

Through your Holy Spirit  
you call us to new birth  
in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose  
we offer you our praise,  
with angels and archangels  
and the whole company of heaven,  
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

### **SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS - [MORVEN]**

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,  
God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you,  
most loving Father,  
for the gift of your Son born in human flesh  
He is the Word existing beyond time,  
both source and final purpose,  
bringing to wholeness all that is made.

Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross.  
By your power you raised him from the dead.  
He broke the bonds of evil  
and set your people free  
to be his Body in the world.

On the night when he was given up to death,  
knowing that his hour had come,  
having loved his own,  
he loved them to the end.  
At supper with his disciples  
he took bread and offered you thanks.  
He broke the bread,  
and gave it to them, saying:  
"Take, eat.  
This is my Body: it is broken for you."  
After supper, he took the cup,  
he offered you thanks,  
and gave it to them saying:  
"Drink this, all of you.  
This is my Blood of the new covenant;  
it is poured out for you, and for all,  
that sins may be forgiven.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

**We now obey your Son's command.  
We recall his blessed passion and death,  
his glorious resurrection and ascension;  
and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.  
Made one with him, we offer you these gifts  
and with them ourselves,  
a single, holy, living sacrifice.**

Hear us, most merciful Father,  
and send your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon this bread and this wine,  
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,  
they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,

and we may be kindled with the fire of your love  
and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

**Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body  
to live and work to your praise and glory;  
may we grow together in unity and love  
until at last, in your new creation,  
we enter into our heritage  
in the company of the Virgin Mary,  
the apostles, and prophets,  
and of all God's children living and departed.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
with whom, and in whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory be to you,  
Lord of all ages,  
world without end.

**Amen.**

### **Breaking of the Bread**

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.  
**Lord, unite us in this sign.**

### **Lord's Prayer [KELVIN]**

As our Saviour has taught us,  
so we pray:

**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.**

**Do not bring us  
to the time of trial  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

### **Communion - [OLIVER]**

God is with us wherever we are.

As we gaze in adoration we feed on God in our hearts and minds  
that we may in turn feed the world.

O God, even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and  
was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be  
gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for  
yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.  
**Amen.**

### **Music at Communion - [CHRISTINE]**

Touch the earth lightly,  
use the earth gently,  
nourish the life of the world in our care:  
gift of great wonder,  
ours to surrender,  
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger,  
who create hunger,  
agents of death for all creatures that live,  
we who would foster  
clouds of disaster—  
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening,  
birth from the burning,  
water that blesses and air that is sweet,

health in God's garden,  
hope in God's children,  
regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living,  
God of all loving,  
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,  
teach us, deflect us,  
Christ reconnect us,  
using us gently, and making us one.

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### **Post Communion Prayer - [DIANE]**

Holy and blessed God, as you give us the body and blood of your Son, guide us with your Holy Spirit, that we may honour you not only with our lips but also in our lives. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Blessing - [OLIVER]**

The seeds of faith sprout and grow—even if we're not quite sure what's happening. Just planting the seed and showing up can yield results. Take heart in your journey. God can do it.

To all those who cultivate faith in this place—to make this worship happen—thank you.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

### **Voluntary - [STEVEN]**

Praeludium in F# – D. Buxtehude

*There is an online coffee hour on Sunday at 1 pm. Details in the weekly congregational email. Sign up for emails at [www.thecathedral.org.uk](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk)*