

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 21st April 2024
Family Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Easter
Minister: The Revd Neil Coulson
Organist: Mr Stephen Hogger

Hello, I hope you are well. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

The Lord is our shepherd, the Good Shepherd who loves his sheep.
 We will love one another, as Christ loves us.
 Love, not merely in thought and word, but in truth and action.
 Open your hearts to goodness and mercy today.
 Come today and praise the God of love.
 May God bless our service today. Amen.

R&S 712 All people that on earth do dwell

1 All people that on earth do dwell,
 sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
 him serve with mirth his praise forth tell;
 come ye before him and rejoice.

2 The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
 without our aid he did us make;
 we are his folk, he doth us feed;
 and for his sheep he doth us take.

3 O enter then his courts with praise,
 approach with joy his courts unto;
 praise, laud and bless his name always,
 for it is seemly so to do.

4 For why: the Lord our God is good,
 his mercy is for ever sure;
 his truth at all times firmly stood,
 and shall from age to age endure.

William Kethe (Publ. 1560-61) altd. Psalm 100

A prayer of adoration and confession

Good Shepherd,
 help us to boldly proclaim your love,
 lighting the way of your truth for all to see.
 As we walk through green pastures,
 beside still waters,
 and even through the darkest valleys,
 help us to go forth confidently.
 For you are greater than our fears
 and you know how to bring us peace.

As the world we live in seems to be a more fearful place every day,
 help us to remember that you ARE with us.
 Goodness and mercy may seem so elusive,
 but we know that you have promised we will find
 them in your house, if no where else.

Lord, we confess to you that there are times where we have
 seen enemies in the faces of our neighbours...
 the other....the refugee...the poor...and the oppressed...
 As you have prepared out tables, Lord,
 Help us to turn enemies into friends.
 Help us to desire a longer table, where more can be welcomed in your name. Amen.

A prayer of praise

The Lord rounds us up like a shepherd with his sheep,
 making sure that we want for nothing and rest in safety.
 The Lord leads us where we need to go,
 making our paths as smooth as they can be.
 Whatever life throws at us,
 we have no reason to fear,
 for you, Lord, are with us and comfort us.
 Whatever struggles we have to endure,
 whatever opposition we face,
 your goodness and mercy go with us,
 and we will worship and praise you, our God, for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Choir Anthem *Day by Day*

Music by Martin How
 Words by St Richard of Chichester.

Family Time

Hymn The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
 He makes me lie in pastures green.
 He leads me by the still, still waters,
 His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone,
 And I will trust in You alone,
 For Your endless mercy follows me,
 Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
 And He anoints my head with oil,
 And my cup, it overflows with joy,
 I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
 I will not fear the evil one,
 For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
 Are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend
 Copyright © 1996 Thankyou music.

The children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing

Old Testament Reading Psalm 23*The Divine Shepherd**A Psalm of David.*

¹The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

Epistle Reading**1 John 3:16-24**

¹⁶We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister^[a] in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Gospel Reading**John 10:11-18***Jesus the Good Shepherd*

¹¹'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

R&S 372 O love divine, how sweet thou art!

1 O love divine, how sweet thou art!
 When shall I find my longing heart
 all taken up by thee?
 I thirst, I faint, and die to prove
 the greatness of redeeming love,
 the love of Christ to me.

2 Stronger his love than death or hell,
 its riches are unsearchable;
 the angels in their light
 desire in vain its depths to see,
 they cannot reach the mystery,
 the length, the breadth, and height.

3 God only knows the love of God;
 O that it now were shed abroad
 in this poor stony heart!
 For love I sigh, for love I pine;
 this only portion, Lord, be mine,
 be mine this better part!

*Charles Wesley (1707-88)**

Reflection based on today's readings***A moment for personal reflection*****R&S 552 The King of love my Shepherd is**

1 The King of love my Shepherd is,
 whose goodness faileth never;
 I nothing lack if I am his
 and he is mine for ever.

2 Where streams of living water flow
 my ransomed soul he leadeth,
 and where the verdant pastures grow
 with food celestial feedeth.

3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
 but yet in love he sought me,
 and on his shoulder gently laid,
 and home, rejoicing, brought me.

4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
 with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
 thy rod and staff my comfort still,
 thy cross before to guide me.

5 Thou spread'st a table in my sight,
 thy unction grace bestoweth;
 and O what transport of delight
 from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so through all the length of days
 thy goodness faileth never;
 Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
 within thy house for ever.

H. W. Baker (1821-77)

Our prayers of intercession

Jesus you are the good shepherd
 hear our prayers for all who shepherd others in troubled times.
 Guide and strengthen leaders of nations and organisations;
 lead them in the ways of integrity and justice to strive for peace and freedom for all.
 Be with all who offer care to others at home, at work and in the Church
 and inspire all caregivers to serve with love and compassion.
 When we feel weary and disillusioned draw us close
 to your loving heart and restore our souls.

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

Jesus, you lay down your life for your sheep.
 Be with all who have lost loved ones at the hand of another
 and with those who feel as though they are walking through the valley of the shadow of death.
 Send your loving mercy on them, that they may not lose hope.
 In places of political tension bring your calming spirit
 and let the voices of restraint carry weight.
 Grant that all who hunger for bread may receive what they need
 and those who hunger and thirst for justice may see it come soon.
 Lead us, the people of your flock, in the way that leads to abundant life
 for ourselves and those in other folds.

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

Jesus, you desire that there should be one flock with one shepherd.
 We hold before you someone we know who feels on the outside,
 who yearns to be known and to belong.
 Give us your desire to break down barriers
 and to build bridges to connect with those who are different to us.
 In times of enmity and conflict between nations and peoples
 we pray for your blessing on those who seek to bring
 people of different faiths together in mutual love and respect.
 Strengthen the work of all who strive for unity and understanding
 and help us to be peacemakers in the places where we live and work.

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

Jesus, loving shepherd, you know each of us by name,
 you find us when we are lost,
 your goodness and mercy follow us our whole life long.
 Hear us as we now name in silence
 the deepest longings and prayers of our hearts,
 for ourselves and our loved ones....

Lord, bring us to the place you have prepared for us at your banquet table,
 where our cup overflows with divine grace – even now. Amen.

BPW 382 I will sing the wondrous story

I will sing the wondrous story
of the Christ who died for me,
how he left the realms of glory
for the cross of Calvary.

*Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
of the Christ who died for me,
sing it with the saints in glory,
gathered by the crystal sea.*

I was lost, but Jesus found me,
found the sheep that went astray,
raised me up and gently led me
back into the narrow way.

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story...

Days of darkness still may meet me,
sorrow's path my feet may tread;
but his presence still is with me,
by his guiding hand I'm led.

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story...

He will keep me till the river
rolls its waters at my feet;
then He'll bear me safely over,
made by grace for glory meet.

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story...

F.H.Rowley (1854-1952)

The Blessing

May you show the love of God in all you do.
Following the Good Shepherd,
welcome others with kindness, love, and humility.
Bring comfort to all,
making friends and not enemies,
wherever you go.

May the blessing of our loving and gracious God,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
be upon you, and those whom you love,
this day and always. Amen.

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**