

**Christ Church, Ipswich**  
*Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026*  
**Family Worship for The Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Hello, I hope you are well. For this Fourth Sunday of Easter, our focus will be on our reading from the Gospel, John 10:1-10, where Jesus speaks as a shepherd whose sheep hear his voice and who beckons us to embrace life in all its fullness. Let us worship God together:

**Call to worship**

Come, let's raise our voices in worship, knowing that God hears and knows us. Come, let's listen and hear Jesus' voice though our wrestling with Scripture and in our worship today.

**A gathering prayer**

Loving Lord, there are many sounds around us, lots of voices making lots of noise. Help us to hear your voice: of encouragement, of challenge, of peace and comfort and joy, as you speak into our hearts today. Amen.

**A prayer of approach**

Lord, we are gathered here safely, in the presence of the good shepherd. We feel your arms penning us in, surrounding us with your love. We are secure in belonging to you. You know us, and we rejoice in knowing you. 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**

Jesus wanted us to have life and live it to the full.  
Lord, you are the good shepherd  
who gave his life for his sheep –  
and that means us!  
As a shepherd knows his sheep by name,  
so, Lord, do you know each one of us.  
You call us by our name  
to come into your divine presence –  
we worship you, O Lord. **Amen.**

**A prayer of confession and an assurance of forgiveness**

Lord, we know what we want, and we want it now.  
We will follow any new fad to get it; or any stranger.  
Forgive us, good shepherd, and bring us back  
**to where we know and are truly known.**

Lord, we know where we want to go.  
 And sometimes, we don't mind treading on a few toes to get  
 there, even trying to get ahead of our leader.  
 Forgive us, good shepherd, and bring us back  
**to where we know and are truly known.**

We think we know who we are,  
 but only you, Lord, truly know us.  
 Forgive us, good shepherd, and bring us back  
**to where we know and are truly known.**

Lord, sometimes we are content with a lesser form of life  
 than the one you desire for us.

We don't always try to get to know other people  
 before we let them influence us.

Forgive us, good shepherd, and bring us back  
**to where we know and are truly known. Amen.**

### **An assurance of forgiveness**

Thank you, O God, that in you we have the safety and security of your abundant forgiveness.  
 Your forgiveness wraps us in security and new hope.  
 Praise be to God. **Amen.**

### **A prayer of thanksgiving**

For your presence in our lives,  
 great Shepherd of the sheep:  
**we praise and adore you.**

For the security you offer us,  
 great Shepherd of the sheep:  
**we praise and adore you.**

For your life that enriches our life,  
 great Shepherd of the sheep:  
**we praise and adore you.**

For the sense of belonging,  
 great Shepherd of the sheep:  
**we praise and adore you.**

For our place in your sheepfold,  
 great Shepherd of the sheep:  
**we praise and adore you. Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Family Talk**

#### **Hymn: The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want** (And I will trust in you alone...)

1 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.*

2 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 I will trust in you alone...*

3 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.

*And I will trust in you alone...*

Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou music.

**The children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing**

**Acts Reading****Acts 2:42-47****NT page 111**

<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

<sup>43</sup>Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved

**Gospel Reading****John 10:1-10****NT page 96***Jesus the Good Shepherd*

**10** 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

**R&S 38 Thou whose almighty word**

1 Thou whose almighty word  
chaos and darkness heard,  
and took their flight;  
hear us, we humbly pray,  
and where the gospel-day  
sheds not its glorious ray,  
let there be light!

2 Thou who didst come to bring  
on thy redeeming wing  
healing and sight,  
health to the sick in mind,  
sight to the inly blind,  
now to all humankind  
let there be light!

3 Spirit of truth and love,  
life-giving, holy dove,  
speed forth thy flight;  
move on the waters' face,  
bearing the lamp of grace,  
and in earth's darkest place  
let there be light!

4 Holy and blessed Three,  
glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, Love, Might,  
boundless as ocean's tide  
rolling in fullest pride,  
through the world far and wide,  
let there be light!

John Marriott (1780-1825)

**Reflection*****A moment for reflection as Stephen plays the organ***

**R&S 629 Make me a channel of your peace.**

1 Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:

*O, Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

2 Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;  
and where there's sadness, bring your joy:

3 Make me a channel of your peace;  
for when we give we will ourselves receive.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and in dying that we gain eternal life.

From a prayer sometimes attributed to St Francis  
(1182-1226) arr. Sebastian Temple. (1928 - 1997)\*  
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**Our prayers of intercession**

Good Shepherd, your sheep need protection.  
So much in the world threatens to harm or destroy them.  
They are oppressed, exploited, unjustly treated,  
prey to conflict and violence. We pray for . . .  
We ask that the world may know life in all its fullness.  
In your love and mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Good Shepherd, your sheep need good pasture.  
So many in the world do not have enough to eat. -  
Their lives are narrowed by need as they struggle to exist.  
We pray for...

We ask that the needy may know life in all its fullness.  
In your love and mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Good Shepherd, your sheep need healing.  
So many are sick and in pain.  
Incapacitated by illness, sorrow, anxiety,  
their journey through life is hard. We pray for . . .

We pray that those in trouble  
may know life in all its fullness.  
In your love and mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Good Shepherd, your sheep need guidance.  
So often they do not know the way they should go  
but stumble along blindly, not listening for your voice.  
We pray for guidance for the Church . . .

We pray that we may know life in all its fullness.  
In your love and mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Good Shepherd, your sheep need saving.  
So often they stray from you and get lost,  
needing your costly forgiveness,  
needing you to risk all to fetch them back.

We pray for ourselves . . . *Silence*

We pray that we may know life in all its fullness.  
In your love and mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

In the name of the Good Shepherd who lay down his life for the  
sheep. **Amen.**

**BPW 57 Majesty, worship his majesty**

1 Majesty, worship his majesty,  
 Unto Jesus be glory, honour, and praise.  
 Majesty, kingdom, authority,  
 flow from his throne unto his own, his anthem raise!

*So exalt, lift up on high the Name of Jesus,  
 magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the King.  
 Majesty, worship his majesty,  
 Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings.*

Jack Hayford  
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**The Blessing**

Go now in the peace of the Shepherd:  
 gathered in his love,  
 guided by his voice,  
 guarded by his grace.  
 May Christ, the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls,  
 lead you into abundant life.  
 And may the blessing of God Almighty  
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
 be amongst us and remain with us  
 this day and for evermore. 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.**