

Service for 25th April 2021

The Good Shepherd

Welcome

Call to Worship

Here we are Lord; your people, your Church meeting together in your presence. We welcome each other and we welcome you. Make yourself known to us in new ways through our worship, our prayers and our understanding of your Word today.

1st Hymn 337 StF There is a higher throne.

Prayers of praise

Maker of the world,

we praise you for the whole creation.

Yours is the power,

yours is the glory.

Maker of the world,

we praise you for your presence in the
world.

Yours is the power,

yours is the glory.

For human love,

which is a mirror of your loving spirit.

Yours is the power,

yours is the glory.

For friendship,

which is a mirror of your unifying spirit.

Yours is the power,

yours is the glory.

For imagination,

which flows from your creative spirit.

Yours is the power,

yours is the glory.

We praise you for your word,

Yours is the power,

yours is the glory.

We offer up our prayers in Jesus name

Amen

Quick note about what this morning is about,

Our theme for today is Jesus the Good Shepherd

Many of our congregation have been able to assist me in this service, which I felt was important as although we are not meeting live it is nice for others to be able to have an input .

So we are now going to hear Heather and Steve sing ,psalm 23. Please remain muted and listen to the words,

This Psalm was my Mum's favourite sung as a hymn, every Sunday without fail at the kitchen sink the words would echo out " right Penny we will now sing the Lords My Shepherd you sing the melody I will do the descant".

That's fine if you can sing !!! I used to sing my heart out again and again and again. Then one day I asked Mum what it was that made her want to sing The Lord's My Shepherd (Mum would never have sung Abba)

She sat me down and told me this story ,

When she was 14 years old she sang the descant at St Thomas Church in Albany Rd. a blind man walked In sat and listened , after Mum had finished several pieces he asked the choir mistress who the choir boy was ,as he had spoken to him, in one particular piece.

The choir mistress explained that it was a girl not a boy and he was amazed, in later life my Mum felt that though she rarely went to Church at that time through music God had spoken to that man.

Now when I was younger although I got goose bumps from psalm 23 I didn't get it ,to a certain extent not until I was a Junior Church teacher did I fully understand .it's meaning

And I think that is what happened to this blind man , he knew the psalm had heard it countless times, but in that moment he realised what it meant.

He could relate to this entire psalm, to the green pastures, the still waters the knowledge that God will meet all of his / our basic needs, and then there is the realization that in the darkest times, in those valleys when you think you have nowhere to turn you are not on your own. Here the blind man learnt that the writer of the psalm (David) is saying that no matter what we go through in life--even if we go through something very sad, or painful, or terrible;: God will be walking with us. Even through the dark valleys

what a wonderful moment that must have been , and how joyous to be part of it to see someone have their faith affirmed .

Mum's gift of song had been able to show that blind man that God had never left him.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Father ,We give thanks for all that you have given us,

sometimes it does not seem like much to us and we moan, we are human.

We thank you for the gift of music ,and all the other arts that we are able to enjoy freely
We give thanks for the opportunities that come our way and for what we have yet to achieve in your name

We ask that you receive our thanks.

Lord we offer so little, yet you give us so much,
Our love is so weak, yet you respond so richly,
Our faith is so small yet you bless us constantly-
Your generosity towards us far beyond our deserving.
Though we fail you, you never fail us:
Receive our Thanks
Amen

Hymn When I was lost you came and rescued me

Dialogue The Good Shepherd (The Nkantaka family)

John 10:11-18 (Lois)

Talk

I was almost in turmoil with this passage , because my first thought was what is this passage saying to me .I knew that what ever my thoughts were they would be different to others, or would they, so then I came up with the idea ask a few people what this passage means to them.

So now on the screen you will see a few sentences or in some cases just a word to signify what John 10:11-18 means to various members of our congregation.

But here are my thoughts for you to ponder on.

For me these verses speak of Jesus as our intimate friend and strangely (and I didn't know this at the start) in Hebrew or at least in old Hebrew , shepherd means friend.

Let's face it Jesus always had a way of sharing who he was with the people then ,in such a way that they would understand and the glorious thing is that it still relates today .

Jesus is explaining that he is our/your friend that you can trust him, but he goes further than that , he is explaining that a shepherd would lay down his life for his sheep ,he would protect them no matter what ,so here for me it is just a hair standing on- end moment as Jesus speaks of sacrificing his own life for others, and between the lines you can see that Jesus is in fact telling the Pharisees off for all their failures ,they are the wolves or the hired hands, only looking to themselves unconcerned about the spiritual needs of others.

Sheep bond with each other and with their shepherds and the shepherds bond with the sheep, so you can see why Jesus chose this analogy, but if you just skim over the reading you would perhaps be forgiven for thinking that just a few may not be listening ,well what I am saying this morning is this Jesus does not care how many he wants them to be drawn into one flock .

So it is up to us to continue with his work to spread the good news that no-one absolutely no-one will be left out should they want and find a real relationship with Christ.

To be drawn into the flock by hearing God's voice is a faith experience, some have unexceptional ones some have explosive ones God is not bothered on how or when you come to faith because if He wants you for a job he will keep nagging at you.

He will give you strength when you most need and this is what Jesus is saying to you

I am the good shepherd, I am there for you, I gave up my earthly life for you but I still live and you can have a relationship with me, but when you do don't for heaven's sake keep it to yourself tell every one.

Jesus is considered to be the shepherd of Israel but in fact his flock includes those from all nations , as he calls them out of darkness into the light.

And that is exactly what the blind man heard in psalm 23 .

Amen

Prayers of confession

Sometimes, O God, we forget people, or we toss them aside – the difficult ones, the needy ones, the ones that are hard to spend time with, the ones who confront us. And sometimes when we do things like that, it's not really about the other people, but about us. We are uncomfortable, or we feel guilty, or we follow brighter, shinier people, or we worry about what will make us look good. We are in such desperate need of your forgiveness. We need to be

forgiven for our sin, for our mistakes, for mistaking what the world values with what you value. Help us to be better, and to see more clearly, and to care more thoroughly.

In Christ we pray. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession/Lords Prayer (Akinamo)

Our final hymn is Love Divine all loves Excelling ,because that is what Christ's love for us is

Love Divine All Loves Excelling StF 503

Blessing

So go now into this day with confidence,

For the Lord is with you.

May the joy of Christ shine through your eyes

The compassion of Christ reach out through your hands

The word of Christ speak from your mouth,

The peace of Christ fill your mind

And the love of Christ flow from your heart

Reach out

And live for him

For his names sake

Amen

