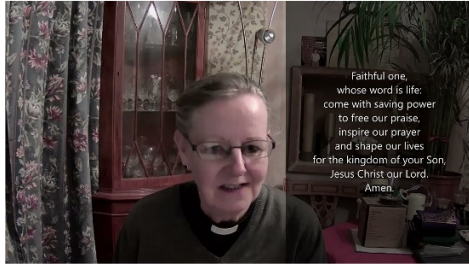


Good morning everyone, and I hope you are in a position to enjoy the lovely weather today. Once again, we have services both in church (Hurley at 9.30am and Kingsbury at 11am) and on video. Attached is the text of the online worship and also of my reflection on today's theme of the Good Shepherd.

<https://youtu.be/FTst0EtnMk>



Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

A Service of Morning Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Easter from the Kingsbury and Baxterley group of Parishes, including a reflection on Jesus the Good She...
youtu.be

There is sad news to share today, with the death this week of Marie Bridgewater. Marie (along with Alan, who died last year) did so much for Hurley Church and our whole group, and was dearly loved. We hold the whole family in our prayers, along with the Makepeace family following the death of Desmond's mother Doreen.

With my prayers and best wishes

John

Revd Dr John White

Priest in Charge of Kingsbury, Baxterley with Hurley and Wood End and Merevale with Bentley
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Christ is Risen: A Service of the Word in Easter

The Greeting

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: He has given us new life and hope.

He has raised Jesus from the dead.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Opening Prayer

**All: Faithful one, whose word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.
We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us.

All: Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us.

All: Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.

All: Lord, hear us and help us.

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Collect

Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:
teach us to hear your voice

and to follow your command,
that all your people may be gathered into one flock,
to the glory of God the Father.

All: Amen

*Readings: Acts 4. 5-12
John 10. 11-18*

After each reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Reflection

The fourth Sunday of Easter is now often referred to simply as “Good Shepherd Sunday”. Each year, the Gospel reading for this day focuses on the words of Jesus in which he declares “I am the good shepherd”. The image of Jesus as shepherd is for many of us a familiar and hugely comforting image. Perhaps it brings to mind pictures we remember from children’s Bibles of Jesus, with long beard and flowing locks, and wearing a white robe, gently but firmly carrying a lamb draped across his shoulders, a lamb that the shepherd has rescued from a ditch into which it had foolishly strayed.

But there is a lot more to the notion of the shepherd than that child’s picture. For a start, a shepherd’s life is considerably more gruelling and challenging than some of our more romanticised ideas. I’ve learnt a lot from reading a couple of books by James Rebanks, who has written beautifully about his work on the Cumbrian hill farm that has passed down the generations in his family. Suffice to say, a shepherd’s life is not all carrying and cuddling little woolly lambs. This is hard work, in often tough conditions.

But the idea of Jesus as the good shepherd is also more deeply rooted in scripture than we sometimes realise. The people of Israel are often described as the sheep of God’s pasture; and just as God’s rule over the nation is compared to that of the shepherd, so the land’s earthly rulers are depicted as shepherds, called to lead and protect, to nurture and to guide, those under their care. David, the shepherd boy who became king, was viewed as the role model for all the kings and rulers who would follow. Some would be faithful shepherds over Israel; most would fall far short. Only God could be the true and perfect shepherd of this flock.

In saying, “I am the good shepherd”, Jesus aligns himself with the picture of God seen in the well known and well-loved twenty-third psalm: “The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.” One of the things that makes that psalm resonate so deeply across the centuries and in such a range of situations is the picture that it gives of the different landscapes through which the shepherd leads the sheep, that echo the different seasons in our lives. There are the green pastures, the still waters; the times and places in which we can take simple pleasure; but the psalm also speaks of the presence of the shepherd even as we walk “through the valley of the shadow of death”. As one of the hymn versions puts it, “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.”

There are times in all our lives when death casts a deep and a dark shadow. Few of us were left untouched by the poignant image in the funeral service for Prince Philip, of Her Majesty the Queen

sitting alone, dressed in black, face veiled and head bowed, in silent mourning. In her grief, she was truly in death's dark vale; and although the hearts of millions went out to her, we were conscious that at that moment there was no human hand to reach out and comfort her. We were looking at a Queen; but at that moment we were far more aware that we were looking at a widow, someone sharing the same burden of bereavement that, at one time or another, is common to all.

Alone; but not alone. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me". The psalm is a promise that the good shepherd is with us in all of those landscapes of life, the times of joy and the times of sorrow. There are echoes of it in the well-loved poem 'Footprints', in which the tracks in the sand are witness both to the presence of the Lord throughout our lives, but also to the times when we can no longer walk in our own strength and Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lifts us up, lays us on his shoulders, and gently carries us.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is the one who leads us through the valley of the shadow of death. I just want to finish by drawing attention to that word "through". This dark valley is part of the journey, and an inevitable part; but it is not the journey's end. Jesus, the one who died and rose again, is the one who leads us through death and into the pastures that lie beyond. The shadow will not always hang over us, and just as God led the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the desert and into the promised land, so our shepherd will lead us safely across the river and into the land beyond. We will enjoy the still waters and the green pastures, where there will be one flock and one shepherd. Alleluia.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith
in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All : Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

This response may be used

Jesus, Lord of life:

All : in your mercy, hear us.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathering our prayers and praise into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,**

thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

All: 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.

Praise

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
All: **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**
Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
All: **He has given us new life and hope.**
He has raised Jesus from the dead.
God has claimed us as his own.
All: **He has brought us out of darkness.**
He has made us light to the world.
Alleluia. Christ is risen.
All: **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.
The peace of the Lord be always with you
All: **and also with you.**

Closing Prayer

**All: God of our salvation,
you have restored us to life,
you have brought us back again into your love
by the triumphant death and resurrection of Christ.
Continue to heal us,
as we go to live and work
in the power of your Spirit,
to your praise and glory.**

Christ the good shepherd,
who laid down his life for the sheep,
draw you and all who hear his voice,
to be one flock within the fold;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be upon you and remain with you
and all whom you love
this day and always.

All: Amen.

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published by Church House Publishing.*

Keep Singing from Sarah

Hello to you all

I hope you have had a good week.

Here is some music to accompany 25th April - Fourth Sunday of Easter

249 - Great is thy/your faithfulness - [Great is thy faithfulness - YouTube](#)

156 - Faithful shepherd, feed me - [Pastor pastorum "Faithful Shepherd, Feed Me" - YouTube](#)

337 - I will sing the wondrous story - [HYFRODOL-I WILL SING THE WONDROUS STORY - YouTube](#)

649 - The king of love my shepherd is - [DOMINUS REGIT ME-THE KING OF LOVE MY SHEPHERD IS - YouTube](#)

some more....

Brother James' Air Bain arr Archer - [The Lord's my shepherd \(Brother James' Air\) \(soloists Oliver Winstone, Jeremy Edwards\) - YouTube](#)

The King of love my shepherd is Trad Irish arr Bairstow - [The King of Love My Shepherd Is \(Arr. E. C. Bairstow\) - YouTube](#)

These are they that follow the lamb Goss - [These are they that follow the Lamb - John Goss, John Rutter, The Cambridge Singers - YouTube](#)

My shepherd is the living Lord - [My shepherd is the living Lord - YouTube](#)

Taizé Psallite Deo - [Psallite Deo - YouTube](#)

Rizza The Twenty-third Psalm - [Officium Divinum, Midday Prayer: No. 7, The 23rd Psalm - YouTube](#)

This week we have been enjoying watching all of the birds in our garden, we have a few robins including a baby as well as several blue tits, great tits and blackbirds. Its lucky our cat is not a big hunter...he'd rather sit and look at them through the window than actually chase them outside. He enjoys "growling" at them from the safety of the sofa though ha!

The frog spawn in our pond is now all tadpoles too and despite the cold mornings it very much feels like spring at last which is lovely.

Emily continues to bake for her Duke of Edinburgh Award and the treat this week was a "left over" chocolate meringue tart using Some Easter Egg which had not been eaten yet....I can confirm it was delicious!

Thinking of you all and sending love

Sarah and the family xxxx