

PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST



Coming to Faith, Growing in Faith

Week Commencing
SUNDAY 3RD MAY 2020
4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FOCUS ON ... THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In the Bible, shepherds are depicted as people of wisdom, care, comfort, reliability, fortitude, sacrifice and protection. Notably, the author of Psalm 23 describes the Lord as a shepherd who protects the flock, feeds and waters them, gathers them into the fold and fends off anything and anyone that could harm them. And in the familiar Gospel parable, we read of the shepherd who searches for a single lost sheep, leaving ninety-nine others, who lays it across his shoulders and carries the lost sheep home.

Many people, reflecting on events in their life, will acknowledge a sense of God's gentle presence, of being carried through difficult circumstances, of being healed and comforted. Many of us can recall times when we have been guided and protected, even in the most difficult times. As well as times when we have wandered off from the right path and God has gently guided us back. Jesus, then, is the Good Shepherd who looks after his flock. But he also presents himself as the "gate" to the sheep fold, the one who both offers the sheep freedom to find fresh pasture but also encloses and protects them.

But there are times when we ourselves are called to be shepherds rather than sheep. As Christ the Good Shepherd is the pattern for our life, so we should strive to be shepherds too. This means having care and concern for those in real danger in our world, having compassion for people who are fearful and anxious about life, and being kind and supportive to all in need.

We believe that God, in Christ our Good Shepherd, cares for us and has done so throughout our lives. And we also acknowledge those people who have, like shepherds, looked out for us. We have been cared for, we are cared for, and so, in turn, we care. We are Christ's sheep. But we are also called to be his co-shepherds – called to care for those who are vulnerable and to offer guidance and help, that all may dwell safely in the fold.

Tony Bundock

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COLLECT FOR 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER AND THE FOLLOWING WEEK

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, *Amen*.

READINGS FOR 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts Ch. 2 VV. 42 – 47
1 Peter Ch. 2 VV. 9 – 25

John Ch. 10 VV. 1 – 10



PRAYER CHAIN PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Heavenly Father, we thank you for listening to our prayers.

We earnestly pray for containment and an end to the Coronavirus Worldwide. We pray for the safety and protection of all NHS staff, all carers, the elderly and the vulnerable. We hold the sick and suffering in our Healing prayers. We pray for the good health and safety of our loved ones, families, friends and ourselves. At this lock down time we pray for children to be protected from domestic abuse and bullying. Send your peaceful presence to all homes Lord.

We thank you for our communities and for all who offer to help others: for the workers and volunteers who contribute to keep the wheels of business turning. We pray for the people of Syria and Yemen, facing conflict-we pray that supplies and aid might reach them. We pray for world peace.

We especially care and pray for those who have recently departed this world and send loving compassion to those grieving families. We continue in faith and take comfort from God's word in our Bibles 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' Joshua .1 v 5. And from Jesus' words 'I am with you always even to the end of time.' Matthew 28 v20. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

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

Prayer Notes

- We pray for all parts of the world affected by the Coronavirus (Covid-19), those who are ill with the virus and the souls of those who have died. We pray for those working in the NHS and Social Services who are working with the sick, the elderly and the disabled.
- We pray for those in our parish who are isolating themselves due to age or infirmity and those supporting them.
- For those in the parish and further afield who are sick or in need that they receive peace and healing, including: Irene Foord, Mary Mines, Helena Oecken, Ian Wilson, Ron Goodearl, Phillipa King, Reverend Rob Brown and Barnaby Woods.
- For the recently departed, particularly for Ruth Barclay. May their souls rest in peace. We pray for Jo Niven and her family at this difficult time.
- For Peace and Resolution for the peoples of those countries where there is conflict or tension including countries in the Middle East, Ukraine, Nigeria, Venezuela, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong.
- For Comfort and mercy for the peoples of those countries, where there have been natural disasters, and for the aid agencies bringing relief.
- For our Government and Parliament at this time of uncertainty, that that MP's of all parties will come together in the National Interest.
- For migrants that they may receive justice and mercy.
- Safety for Christians and peoples of all faiths in danger that there may be a spirit of peace and understanding.
- For our mission and ministry in this community.
- For our Linked Parish of St. Mary's Kuruman.
- Thanks for our church community and our shared faith
- Thanks for all who help, in any way, in our Church.
- For our successful fundraising events, this year.

HELP FOR FAMILIES IN THE PRINCES RISBOROUGH AREA

St. Mary's, Princes Risborough, supported the Town Council, is setting up a temporary food bank in Princes Risborough as a joint venture between the Christian community of Princes Risborough and the Town Council. Initially this will operate from St Mary's Parish Hall.

It is planned to launch the Food Bank on Monday 11th May. The Food Bank will open from 10am to 2pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. At this stage, they anticipate needing three volunteers on each day to help sort through food donations, make up food parcels, and coordinate logistics. Some people may be able to pick up their own packages, whereas others are self-isolating and will need their package delivering to the doorstep.

Initially they are looking for volunteers, food donations, gifts of money and most of all prayer support. Help and suggestions for running the Food Bank are most surely appreciated. Further details to follow.

YOUR GIVING TO ST. JOHN'S TO SUPPORT ITS MISSION IN OUR COMMUNITY

At St John's we are very grateful to all our congregation and visitors for their kind and generous donations to the church. These donations are crucial in ensuring we can continue to operate (we don't receive any funding from the diocese to cover the cost of running the church), and the suspension of services is likely to have a very significant impact on church finances. Further details on how you can support St. John's provided on previous pew sheets or from Caroline Gulliver (gulliverjc@aol.com).

EASY FUNDRAISING.

Another easy way to raise fund is to use the Easy Fundraising initiative. This allows you to do your online shopping as normal, whilst helping to raise funds for St John's Church. All you need to do is register as a user (for free) at www.easyfundraising.org.uk and nominate St John's Church Lacey Green as your nominated beneficiary.

Once you are registered, every time you want to shop online, simply go to the easy fundraising site, pop in your password and then click through to the retailer you want to shop with. This takes you to the retailer's usual site for you to make your purchase, where you will still pay the price you would have done anyway. Once you have made your purchase, the retailer makes a donation to St John's as a thank you for shopping with them. There are thousands of retailers available and they will give a donation every time you buy something, at no extra cost to you. It's that simple! Retailers include M&S, Vodafone, Amazon, John Lewis, Sports Direct, Boots and many more (4,000+).

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

The Church of England guidance remains the same the church building being closed to Sunday worship. Although our usual pattern of Sunday Services and mid-week gatherings must be put on hold, this does not mean that the Church of England has shut up shop. Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead. At least for the time being, our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at Church on Sunday, and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day. We may not be able to pray for people in the ways that we are used to, but we can certainly pray for people. And we can certainly offer practical care and support. Keep safe and please continue to pray for one another.

Canon Tony, The Churchwardens & The PCC

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