

The Fourth Sunday of Easter: *The Good Shepherd*

SENTENCE for Easter 4:

You were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls. *1 Peter 2:25*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us wake from our weariness,
and bring our fears and anxieties
into the presence of the Living God.

**May we hear again the call of our Shepherd,
and allow that voice
to lead us from self-centredness
to the feast of grace.**

May the light of Christ
shine into the hidden darkness of our lives
and restore us for the service of the Holy One.

Come let us worship God.

Rev'd MaryAnn Rennie, Church of Scotland (adapted)

HYMN: *Good Shepherd, you know us*

1: Good Shepherd, you know us, you call us by name,
you lead us; we gladly acknowledge your claim.
Your voice has compelled us; we come at your call,
and none you have chosen will finally fall.

2: Good Shepherd, you warn us of robbers and thieves;
the hireling, the wolf, who destroys and deceives;
all praise for your promise on which we can stand,
that no-one can snatch us from out of your hand.

3: Good Shepherd, you lay down your life for the sheep;
your love is not fickle, your gift is not cheap.
You spend your life freely, you take it again;
you died, so we live - we are healed by your pain.

4: At one with the Father, you made yourself known:
'I am the Good Shepherd', at one with your own.
You loved us before we had heeded or heard;
by grace we respond to your life-giving word.

Christopher Idle, Tune: ST DENIO

CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION

Hear God's word to all.
God shows love for us
in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Amen.

If we confess our sins,
God is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins
and cleanse us from every kind of wrong.

In silence we call to mind our sins.

Silence

Let us confess our sins.

**God of grace,
we confess that we have sinned,
in what we have thought, and said, and done.
Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ our Shepherd. Amen.**

The Absolution is declared by the bishop or priest saying

God forgives your sins.
Know that God pardons you and sets you free.
Amen.

Form of confession from “The Ministry of Healing” NZPB/HKMOA

COLLECT for the 4th Sunday of Easter

Let us pray for a faith that makes us secure in God’s enduring care:

**Loving Shepherd:
you lead us nowhere you yourself have not been.
Call us by name,
lift us high upon your shoulders,
and bring us to safety:
make us one flock with all your
sheep in different folds.
We make this prayer for your love’s sake. Amen.**

RECORDED MEDITATION: [“The Lord’s My Shepherd”](#) – a worship song by Stuart Townend, sung by Trinity Fellowship

Acts 2:42-47

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 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, 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.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Praise with joy the world's Creator

1: Praise with joy the world's Creator,
God of justice, love, and peace,
source and end of human knowledge,
Force of greatness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory,
power to rescue and release.

2: Praise to Christ who feeds the hungry,
frees the captive, finds the lost,
heals the sick, upsets religion,
fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence:
friend and stranger, guest and host.

3: Praise the Spirit sent among us,
liberating truth from pride,
forging bonds where race or gender,
age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure:
foolishness none dare deride.

4: Praise the Maker, Christ, and Spirit,
one God in community,
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe, when
Shown Christ's vibrant unity.

*John L. Bell & Graham Maule (Iona Community)- Tune: LAUDA ANIMA aka
PRAISE, MY SOUL*

The holy Gospel according to John, chapter 10
Praise and glory to God.

[Jesus said] '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. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise to Christ, the Word.

REFLECTION and Questions:

Scripture reminds us that God is like a shepherd. Even though most of us are not shepherds or had much to do with shepherds, we understand that a shepherd provides for the needs of the ones in their care; not only food but companionship, shelter and assistance in times of difficulty.

- In what ways have you experienced the provision of Jesus the Good shepherd in your own lives during lockdown?
- Who has been Jesus the good shepherd in your life during this time?

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from Psalm 23, *said together*

**I believe that you sustain me and feed me O God:
like a shepherd you guide me.**

**You lead me to an oasis of green,
to lie down by restful waters.
I believe and trust in you.**

You refresh my soul for the journey,

and guide me along trusted roads.

**The God of justice is your name.
Though I must enter the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for I believe and trust in you.**

**You are with me,
your rod and staff comfort me.**

**You prepare a table before my very eyes,
in the presence of those who trouble me,
and so I believe and trust in you.**

**You anoint my head with oil,
and you fill my cup to the brim.**

**Your loving kindness and mercy will meet me
every day of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of my God for ever.
Alleluia! I believe and trust in you.**

Based on NZPB/HKMOA Night Prayer version of Psalm 23

Intercessions

God of heaven and earth through Jesus Christ, the Shepherd of the sheep, you promised to hear us when we pray to you in faith with thanksgiving.

We pray for your church throughout the world, thanking you for all who serve Christ and his Kingdom.

We remember especially, here in Waiapu, the people of Clive Co-operating Parish and their Ministry Support Team members, and the people of Havelock North Parish and their clergy: John Matthews (Vicar), Ann Dinniss. We pray for hospital and St John chaplains. We pray also for each one of us, for we are God's church in the places where we live.

By your Spirit, strengthen your people for their work and witness in the world. Unite us in your truth and love, so that what we do and say may reflect your glory

God of grace,

you hear our prayer.

We pray for the leaders of this and every nation. Give wisdom to those in authority among us, and be with those who are guiding our response to COVID-19. We pray also for scientists and researchers, for those who are seeking a vaccine and for those who are developing policies and fiscal packages to aid the economic recovery in this country and throughout the world.

God of grace,

you hear our prayer.

We thank you for the unfailing love you hold out to everyone In Jesus Christ. We thank you for those who have been Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to us at this time. We ask you to comfort and heal those in sorrow, need, sickness, or any other trouble, and we pray especially for those who must suffer and mourn alone. We ask you to bless and protect health care and rest home workers, first responders, and those who clean our buildings.

God of grace,

you hear our prayer.

We pray for one another, for our families and friends, through whom we learn to love and to be loved. We give thanks especially for those who share our bubbles. Give us grace to serve Christ by serving our neighbours and our communities. May we be signs of Christ's abundant life to one another.

God of grace,

you hear our prayer.

We remember with thanksgiving all who have died in Christ, and we rejoice at the faithful witness of your Saints in every age. May we enter with them into the unending joy of your heavenly Kingdom.

God of grace,
you hear our prayer.

Good Shepherd of the sheep,
by whom the lost are sought
and guided into the fold;
feed us and we shall be satisfied,
heal us and we shall be whole,
and lead us that we may be with you,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit; Amen.

As Christ teaches us we pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN: *This is the truth we hold*

1: This is the truth we hold,
source of the joy we share,
hope that can make us bold
trusting the name we bear:
*that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
In Christ shall all be made alive.'*

2: This is the song of praise
echoing down the years,
true for the present days,
through all our doubts and fears:
*that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
In Christ shall all be made alive.'*

3: Christ is the Living Bread,
Christ is the Word to speak
Christ is the Way to tread,
Christ is the Goal to seek;
*For 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
In Christ shall all be made alive.'*

4: One in the faith we share,
out in his name we go;
Jesus awaits us there,
longing that all should know
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,

In Christ shall all be made alive.’

Basil E. Bridge, Tune: LITTLE CORNARD

COMMISSIONING and SENDING FORTH

Merciful God,
who is more than we can ever imagine,
give us a wider vision of the world;
give us a broader view of justice;
give us dreams of peace
that are not defined by boundaries of geography
or race or religion,
or by the limitations of worldly structures and systems.

**Open our eyes and our ears
that wherever we go,
we may hear your voice calling us by name;
calling us to serve,
calling us to share,
calling us to praise,
so that we never give up on the promise of your reign,
where the world is transformed,
and everyone can enjoy life in all its fullness.
Amen.**

www.christianaid.org.uk

Go now through the gate of this sheepfold
and go with the blessing of God:
Sovereign Creator, Living Word and Holy Spirit

enfolding and surrounding you today and always. Amen.

Spill the Beans Resource Team, Church of Scotland (adapted)

TE HAERENGA ATU / DISMISSAL OF THE COMMUNITY

Haere i runga i te aroha. Haere i runga i te rangimārie.

Āmine. Ka haere mātou i runga i te ingoa o te Karaiti.

Korōria ki te Atua!