

4th Sunday of Easter  
21st April 2024

**I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP. JOHN 10:11

## Rector's Tidings

We expect of people in charge of others, especially in tasks of leadership and service, that they are dedicated to those who rely on them: doctors, social workers, priests and ministers. For those who are Christians, the model is no other than Jesus, the Good Shepherd. He had a heart for people and was willing to go as far as laying down his life for them. All those responsible for others should be like him: not functionaries, not people who just do their job, but, whether lay or ordained, pastors, that is, literally, shepherds, shepherds with a heart, totally dedicated even at great cost to themselves. And let us not forget that we are all entrusted with and to one another. May Jesus among us inspire and guide us.

Fr Hugo



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**Entrance Hymn:**

15 At the name of Jesus

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### **Collect:**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**First Reading:** A reading from Acts (4:8-12):

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said: 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

This is the word of the Lord

***Thanks be to God***

**Responsorial Psalm (118):**

**R./ *The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.***

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. **R/**

I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. **R/**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD; we bless you from the house of the LORD. I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his kindness endures forever. **R/**

## **Second Reading:** A reading from 1 John (3:1-2):

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

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**Gradual Hymn:**

221 The King of Love my Shepherd is

## **Gospel Reading**

Hear the The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (10:11-18):

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said:

'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

'I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd.

'The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ.**



## Prayers of Intercession

We give thanks for all who are called to be shepherds of your people, all who are guides and protectors. We remember bishops and especially our bishop; we pray for all priests and especially our own pastor. Bless all who teach us the faith and help us to walk in the way of holiness.

The Lord is my shepherd;

**I shall fear no evil.**

We ask you to give courage and strength to all who work in the emergency services. We pray for all ambulance crews and paramedics, for air and sea rescue services and for coastguards. We remember the police and the fire crews. Bless, O Lord, all who work for the relief of poverty and suffering among the poor of our world.

The Lord is my shepherd;

**I shall fear no evil.**

We give you thanks for the safety and comfort of our homes We ask you to protect our loved ones and guide them in the ways of peace. Give wisdom and love to all who work in the social services. Comfort all who are lonely or feel unwanted.

The Lord is my shepherd;

**I shall fear no evil.**

God of love, we remember all who have been involved in accidents this week. We pray for all who have been injured and those who are bereaved. We pray for those who have gone into hospital and all who are ill at home.

The Lord is my shepherd;

**I shall fear no evil.**

Good and gracious God, you have rescued us from the darkness of death and opened for us the way to eternal life. We bring before you all our friends and loved ones who are now with you in your kingdom. Lord, grant them your love and light.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

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## Intercessions

### - **For the Church:**

For Justin, our archbishop, Christopher and Martin our bishops and for the bishops, priests, deacons and people of the Diocese of The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East.

For everyone at Christ Church and St Matthew's

### - **For the world:**

Zimbabwe, Russia and Ukraine, the Holy Land.

### - **For our community:**

The Charity Shop and Food Cupboard. For Indiebride. The Halls Trust and Co-op business centre . Christ Church Primary School, Van Gogh Primary

School and Reay Primary School. For our local services, including the post delivery.

**- For the Sick and Bereaved:**

Alice, Anastasia, Bangori, Chester, Christina, Fay and family, Gladstone, John, Julie, Kandy & Benji, Karen, Kenneth, Maria, Neville, Pam, Ruby, Robert, Ron and Stephen.

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**Offertory Hymn**

227 The Lord's my Shepherd

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**Communion Hymn**

59 Glorious things of thee are spoken

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**Post Communion Prayer**

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again: keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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**Texts for prayer and meditation**

The imagery of the shepherd was a familiar one in Jewish culture. Political as well as religious leaders were often called 'shepherds' (see Ezekiel 34) and the metaphor is applied to the Lord himself in the well-loved words of Psalm 23.

The importance of being a leader for the sheep tended to be emphasised in Old Testament texts. John, by contrast, focuses on the deep relationship between the shepherd and his sheep. Jesus therefore transforms a well-known metaphor to highlight that he is more than a leader of his disciples. His sheep recognise his voice and follow him. The shepherd's knowledge of his sheep is as named individuals and he knows their needs.

Jesus, the good shepherd, includes the sheep that are not yet part of his flock. They too are included in the promise he is making.

In verse 18 Jesus makes it very clear that he chooses to give his life up. The Roman and Jewish authorities thought they were in control but it was Jesus who was in absolute control – even on the cross.

### **We ponder...**

- How does Jesus distinguish himself from the shepherds who are not 'good'? How does the good shepherd provide security for his sheep? Who is Jesus thinking of when he speaks of the wolves from whom he will defend his sheep (see also Matthew 15: 16)? How would Jesus ultimately defend his sheep?

### **Oratio:**

The clatter of thoughts in our heads can drown out the quiet voice of God. Ask Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit to help you recognise his voice when he speaks to you. Thank him for the opportunity to soak ourselves in his words in the Bible so we can recognise the way he speaks. Thank him too for being the cornerstone of the church and of our lives as Christians (Psalm 118: 22).

### **Contemplatio:**

Today's other readings confirm the gospel reading. In his speech before the Jewish religious leaders, Peter insists that salvation only comes through Jesus (Acts 4:8-12).

In 1 John 3:1-2 we learn that God's love for us is so great that he made us his children.

We are moving towards the return of Jesus. Then we shall see the 'good shepherd' as he really is.

### **Recessional Hymn**

101 I will sing the wondrous story

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## **Services This Week**

Sunday 28th April Eucharist, 11am & Spanish Mass, 6pm

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### **Next Baptism Preparation Session**

Our next FREE preparation session for all those exploring children's baptism will be on Saturday 18th May from 9.30-10.30am. We will share



breakfast together, sing and have a bible story with puppets and go through parts of the Baptism service looking at water. Children, parents/guardians, grandparents, other family members and potential godparents are all welcome to attend. Don't worry if you missed the first one, and coming to the session doesn't commit you to the July 7th Baptism but it is a way to explore and find out more about what Baptism is and whether it is right for your children or grandchildren.

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## Next Bubble Church

Sunday 5th May, 9.45am

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## Regular Giving

We welcome online donations, which you can make via scanning the QR code. Many thanks for your generosity.



## Daily Bible Verse Reflections

**Monday** Acts 11:28 **Tuesday** Acts 11:21 **Wednesday** Acts 11:24  
**Thursday** Mark 16:20 **Friday Acts 13:31**

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## FREE Music Lessons

We're offering free, one hour music lessons for singing, guitar and drums in Christ Church on Monday and Thursday evenings. Please get in touch with Ubeimar if you're interested.

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## Rooms to hire

We have the Holland Room, large upstairs meeting room and two small upstairs meeting rooms available for hire. Please contact Carolina if interested.

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## Vacancy: Fundraising Officer

We're looking for a part-time Fundraising Officer to join our team. This is a really important role so please do share the information with anyone who might be interested. Applicants should send a CV to John Diego (dop@stmatt.co.uk)

## Contacts:

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