

ST PETER & ST PAUL'S CHURCH, AYLESFORD



A Service of the Word with Holy Communion

The Cost of Care

Easter 4

25th April 2021

Welcome and Gathering

Gathering prayer

Come, beloved sheep, and gather:
let us flock together.

Come and gather:
in the shelter of the shepherd –

nurtured and protected,
guided and known.

Come and gather:
in the shepherd's embrace.

Come and gather:
let us listen to his voice. Amen.

Hymn

I know apart from you there is no life
And there is nothing else that satisfies
But still I wander still I go astray
Still my heart is prone to run

*Good Shepherd won't you rest my soul
In your presence where I belong
Good Shepherd won't you lead me home
To the place where I belong*

There is a way to us that looks so right
But I will walk by faith and not by sight
Your love and mercy they will follow me
Through the shadows I will be safe

Good Shepherd ...

You laid down your life for us
There is no greater love
And we will not be overcome
I am trusting in your goodness
Resting in your promise
We will not be overcome

Good Shepherd ...

This truth I know so well inside my mind
Move it to my heart and all my life

Jon Azzarello

Prayer of confession

Lord, are we sheep or are we wolves?
For sometimes it seems that a killer
instinct is more valued in this world,
and we become one who preys on
communities rather than living in
community.

We may not be aware of it, for the ways
of the world are seductive and we slip
into wolves' clothing without thinking.
We make bad choices – such as how
and where we spend our money – not
thinking of the exploitation that may have
taken place.

Silence

**Lord, Good Shepherd, forgive us these
times – when the wolf lurks beneath.**

**Remind us that, as Christians, we are
creatures of the fold. Bring us back to the
community of love and life, as it should
be lived. Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Lord, who lays down your life for your sheep, how can we doubt your forgiveness? Arms once stretched out upon a cross now close in embrace as we return; enfolded, may we know the fullness of love that lives to forgive, and forgives that we might live. 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. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

1 John 3:16-24

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: if our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in

him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me.

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.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever.

Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia. I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John 10.11-18

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Address

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Response:

Shepherd of the sheep,
we bring our prayers for them all.

Ending:

**O Lord our God, you are the shepherd of
your sheep, bless all those for whom we
have prayed; and bless us, each one of us
as we seek to help those we can, those
we encounter as we live out our lives.
May our feet walk for you, may our
hands touch for you, may our voices
speak for you and may our ears hear the
needs of those who speak. Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

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.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.

He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteous-
ness for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your
staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the pres-
ence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil and
my cup shall be full.

Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Offertory Prayer

Bountiful God, we come with our offerings in response to your love. With the new life in Christ, we give ourselves in service to others. With the energy bestowed by the Spirit, we seek to inflame all your people with a zeal for your way. Receive the work we do, and the gifts we bring, that they may become a blessing in your sight. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

... sing your unending praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

... most Holy Trinity, now and always.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us so 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.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the

glory are yours

now and for ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

I break this bread and take this cup so that we all share in the life of Christ.

God's gifts for all God's people.

Invitation to Communion

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you. Eat in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Giving of Communion

Alleluia.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The body and blood of Christ.

Amen.

Please wait to be guided by a sidesperson.

There will be no words said at the altar.

Prayer after Communion

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.

Sending

News and Notices

Hymn

For ev'ryone born, a place at the table,
For ev'ryone born, clean water and bread,
A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
For ev'ryone born, a star overhead;

*And God will delight when we are creators
Of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
Yes, God will delight when we are creators
Of justice, justice and joy.*

For woman and man, a place at the table,
Revising the roles, deciding the share,
With wisdom and grace, dividing the
power,
For woman and man, a system that's fair,

And God will delight ...

For young and for old, a place at the table,
A voice to be heard, a part in the song,
The hands of a child in hands that are
wrinkled,
For young and for old, the right to belong,

And God will delight ...

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
Abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
In anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
For just and unjust, a new way to live,

And God will delight ...

For ev'ryone born, a place at the table,
To live without fear, and simply to be,
To work, to speak out, to witness and
worship,
For ev'ryone born, the right to be free,

And God will delight ...

A sending out prayer and blessing

Lord, when we feel lost and confused...
Help us to follow the 'good shepherd'.

When we are tired by caring for others...
Help us to follow the 'good shepherd'.

When we're tempted by the wolves...
Help us to follow the 'good shepherd'.

When we're enjoying good pasture and
rest...

Help us to follow the 'good shepherd'.

Send us out to be faithful sheep and...
Help us to follow the 'good shepherd'.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you
and with all those you love and miss,
this day and always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord;
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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