

## **Transcript for Service on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 led by Ruth Dillon & Karen Smith**

Introductory music: *Crimond*

### Opening words

A warm welcome to worship this morning. We may not be able to come together, as we normally would, in our church buildings, but this opportunity to share a time of praise, prayer and scripture together has become very precious in these unusual times. I am delighted that our Minister, Ruth, is on the road to recovery and joins in leading our service.

### Call to Worship

Caring Shepherd, you supply all our needs.

**We celebrate God's generous care of us all.**

Good Shepherd, you take us by the hand and lead us through the dark and fearful times in life.

**We celebrate God's compassion and understanding.**

Gracious Shepherd, your goodness and mercy nurtures and blesses us, and it enriches our soul.

**As we worship you, we share together in the feast  
you prepare for us, and it restores and refreshes us. Amen.**

Karen to announce prayer

### Opening Prayers of Thanksgiving and Confession

There is a response in this morning's prayers. You are invited to join in the words in bold type on the Order of Worship

Let us pray together

**Thanks be to God, merciful and eternal.**

You call us by name and lead us in your way.

You know all that we are, and you still love us.

**Thanks be to God, merciful and eternal.**

You gather us, friends and strangers, drawn together in our difference

Called by the Spirit's power, your people.

Thanks be to God, as we gather here, you will feed us.

When we leave this place, you will be with us.

When we recall your words, you will sustain us.

**Thanks be to God, merciful, and eternal.**

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the message of Easter –

For the assurance it brings of your triumph over death, the proof it offers that love will always have the last word.

You appeared to your followers and then you sent them out to proclaim your resurrection to all.

You met with them, and then called them to lead others to you.

You gave them joy, and then told them to share it.

Easter was not for the few but for all, for the whole world.

Forgive us that often we forget that.

Having experienced your risen presence in our lives, we may keep it to ourselves.

Having met with you, perhaps we haven't introduced others to you in turn.

You have given us good news – let us share it.

**Thanks be to God, merciful, and eternal.**

You call each one of us to be your witnesses –

To tell others what we have experienced of your love,

To make known what you have done for us,

To testify to the way you have changed our lives.

Help us to do that faithfully. Amen

#### Assurance of Pardon

Jesus said "I came not to judge in the world but to save the world" and "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." The good news therefore is this: In Jesus Christ, we are loved and we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen

*Adapted from Nick Fawcett's Prayers for all Seasons*

Knowing this, let us say together the prayer that brings us close to Jesus, saying

#### The Lord's Prayer.

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

1<sup>st</sup> Reading : Psalm 23

read by Pam Hudson

The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters;  
He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for His name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the  
valley of the shadow of death,  
I fear no evil; for You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the  
presence of my enemies;  
You have anointed my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life;  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
Forever.

Second reading: John 10: 1 -10

read by John Gibbons

10“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. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Talk by Rev'd Ruth Dillon

### Psalm 23/ John 10:1-10

*When many people hear the words of Psalm 23, and the image that comes to mind, is one of England's rolling green pastures, with Jesus guiding the sheep, that peacefully graze on lush green shoots of grass, with a gentle stream in the distance. It was a Psalm that many of us learned by heart, in church or heard it to the familiar tune of Crimond.*

*I am sorry to say that in Palestine, when shepherds tended their flock in Palestine, it was far from that, it was a hard-laborious task. The hills were high, rugged, dangerous, dry with truly little grass; in fact, from a distance you could hardly see any grass. The shepherds had to find small tufts of grass for the sheep to graze upon, and so the skill of the shepherd was to lead the sheep to areas of nutritional pasture, on a steep hillside. If a sheep wandered off, they could die because of lack of grass, and water, that lay as drops on the tough grass in the early cool of the day. I have attached a U-tube video link for you to see after the service that wonderfully describes the landscape that Jesus would have been used to seeing the shepherds on the hillside.*

*Like the sheep on the rugged hillside, some sheep maybe weakened by attack of wolves or other diseases, and the shepherd will tend and care for them in their final hours.*

*The two landscapes I have illustrated in Psalm 23 are very different, and that is a little bit like the landscape we have now before Covid 19 and now. Society is different and we will all be changed in some way, only time will tell what shape that change will look. The sheepfold is like our home, where we can be safe from the virus, but venture out, we do so at our own risk. We need the comfort, and knowledge that other sheep are safe, with the sheepfold, and are concerned when one escapes and becomes vulnerable.*

*Psalm 23 spoke to over the last few weeks. I have felt the prayers and concerns of you all whilst I have had coronavirus, but I was safe in the knowledge that Jesus is my Good Shepherd, and obviously has more work for me to do.*

*As Psalm 23 is often said at funerals, and as the death figures in care homes and communities are now added to hospital numbers, the victims of coronavirus will now dramatically increase, and we think about the people who have left us and been guided to their eternal home.*

*As people of faith, we are assured of Jesus guiding and leading us to those pastures where we can be rested, nourished and cared for, however when this familiar Psalm 23 is being read today, we reflect today on the relatives grieving, the concerned patients, the pressure on the many people in the NHS and care staff who are trying to help people gain strength to join the sheepfold, where Jesus can care for them.*

The hymn we shall sing together today is **'The King of Love my Shepherd is'**.

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.

A version to view is found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il1OeQfkVyl&list=RDil1OeQfkVyl&index=1>

A short meditation: audio file with image on screen of a gate

"Spirit of life" by Barbara Hamilton-Holway

Spirit of life, in us and around us,

here is our chance, once again,

to live like we wish the world would live.

May we find within ourselves the courage to be who we are.

May we know when it is time to listen and when it is time to speak.

May we trust ourselves to be the ones to find the words that need to be said  
or to do what needs to be done.

May we trust one another and know there are many ways to go through life.

May we know that though we cannot change some of what life gives to us,  
we can choose how we deal with what we are given.

We are coming into our power, and together we can make possible justice and love.

We are all connected; we depend upon one another more than we know.

We are one body. So be it.

*Silence*

There is a moment when noise ceases.

When the busy world is quiet and the day's work is done.

In that moment... in this silence... may we know God's presence and God's peace.

*Silence*

Amen

Prayers for healing & concern

There will also be times of silence during these prayers for you to bring your concerns before God.

Let us pray together:

In the power of the Spirit, and through Jesus our Saviour, we ask God for healing and love to come to all people.

God of love, we pray for healing for your Church.

We ask for unity between all Christian people, that our divisions may be set aside so that we work together for the furtherance of your kingdom.

God of love, we pray for healing for our world.

We ask for people of every, race and language to recognise that we discover your will for us through justice, reconciliation and peace.

God of love, we pray for healing within our community.

We ask that all the threads of our community are joined together by our common bonds, regardless of background, culture or age.

God of love, we pray for healing within our homes.

We ask that wherever families are divided you will mend broken relationships so that your love will be experienced by all.

God of love, we pray for healing amongst the sick.

We ask that those who are sick, in body, mind or spirit will feel your presence, and that their lives may be transformed.

God of love,

who restores and reconciles people, be with us and make us whole that we may live in your love and peace throughout our lives.

We ask these prayers through Christ, our faithful shepherd. Amen.

### **Final Prayer and Blessing**

May God illuminate our steps, as we take the path that leads to fulfilment

May Jesus guide us, and lead us through the path that may challenge us

May the Spirit of God that dwells deep with us, open our hearts to voice of the Good Shepherd.