

In Touch across North Barrow

Sunday 3rd. May 2020 The Fourth Sunday of Easter 'Good Shepherd Sunday'

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Worship during the day, alone or with household members

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die, alleluia! alleluia!

John 11:25-26

In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Collect for today

Ever patient God,
you never cease to call even those far away,
for it is your will that all be drawn into one fold.
Attune our ears to the voice of the Good Shepherd,
who leads us always to you,
that we may find under your tender protection
life in all its fullness.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Readings : Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10
or during the week from the daily prayer and readings.

The Gospel

10: Jesus said to the Pharisees: ¹ '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. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

Prayers

Almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you that you have brought us safely
to the beginning of this day.
Keep us from falling into sin or running into danger;
order us in all our doings and guide us to do always
what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Conclusion

We are raised to new life with Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

I am the gate for the sheep

Lock-down should mean that our homes are places of safety, though sadly for some in our parishes they are far from it. The sheepfold is a place of safety through the dark hours of the night.

In the Vicarage the cats keep us safe from mice and voles. We have had two offerings this week from the garden, which is fine when they are in plain sight, not so when they are left (caringly?) on a cushion half hidden by a blanket! At least they were dead, it's the ones that are still alive that cause the problems. One evening a mouse was brought to Ruth as she was chilling in the spare room. It escaped to hide under some bags of material. Fortunately it was found the next day in one of the bags having died from the trauma.

In Palestine, shepherds often sleep in the opening of the sheepfold, which is made out of a large circle of thick, high shrubbery. In this way, the shepherds both scare away the wolves and keep the sheep together: wolves smell their presence and are afraid to make midnight raids, while the sheep have no desire to walk over the shepherd to escape through the opening since they recognize him as a sign of security. When day finally dawns, the shepherd will rise and lead his sheep out to pasture. Thus the gate, the door to the sheep pen, symbolizes the complete attention and care given by a good shepherd. Christ chooses this image to teach us what he wants to be for each of us: everything.

A flock of sheep needs both protection and nourishment. The sheepfold provides the protection, and the fields provide the food and water. Without the sheepfold, they are vulnerable to attack as sheep are notoriously bad at self-defence, and without the pasture, they starve. When Jesus calls himself the "gate" for the sheep, he is claiming to provide us with everything we need, both the sheepfold and the pasture, and more than that showing us that this is God's nature to care and provide for those who trust in him.

Lord, I sometimes wonder why you don't give up on us.

Shepherding should never be this hard.

We take the freedom that you have given us,
nurtured so lovingly, and use it to rebel.

You would think the still waters of your presence
the gift of green pastures, would be enough.

But it only takes one sheep

to get a stubborn thought and make a run for it,
and we all follow as a flock.

Crash headlong through the hedge of love
you put there for our safety.

Run bleating into trouble.

That must be hard Lord, to see your loving kindness
thrown back at you in glib hypocrisy.

And yet the wonder is that you don't give up.

Your love goes on through everyone

who tries to make this world a better place.

Your Spirit's compassion nudging us nearer to understanding,
showing us the possibility and joy of reconciliation.

And, one day, Lord, when we are more amenable,

perhaps we will find a way of fellowship

to sit together at your table with all those you call your 'friends'.

*(Adapted from **Breaking the Rules** by Eddie Askew)*

"Christ my God, you humbled yourself in order to lift me,

a straying sheep, on to your shoulders." – *St. John Damascene*

A prayer for VE Day *From the Act of Commitment for Peace*

Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you

and all humankind, in the cause of peace,

for the relief of want and suffering,

and for the praise of your name.

Guide us by your Spirit;

give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope;

and keep us faithful now and always. Amen.

Psalm 23

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

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

3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 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.

5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;

you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.

6 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.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Reflections during the week using Lectio Divina

Use the verse, or verses, for each day following the pattern on the previous page. Each colour corresponds to a day of the week. Write any reflections, or ways in which you feel God is speaking to you in the boxes above

NEWS AND NOTES

St. James Spring Fair. Obviously this won't be going ahead in its usual form, but we will be holding a 'virtual fair' over on our Facebook page for those on social media. There will be some crafty items for sale on Facebook marketplace, and there will be 'virtual cakes' for you to imagine eating along with a donate button so that you can still spend, but calories free. The Spring Raffle will also still take place, although with a reduced number of prizes - if you wish to purchase any raffle tickets please give me a call of an evening on 834403 and just say "Raffle" when the phone prompts you to announce who you are then I can arrange to 'sell' you some tickets or you can always send a cheque as long as it gets to me before 3pm on Saturday 9th May - Shelagh.

Support HUB 9am - 5pm Mon to Fri. Call 01229 444407.

Drop off point for food/ essentials to make up hampers
Living well Centre, Duke Street, Barrow LA14 1XU

Hospital Chaplaincy Hearts: If anyone would like to help, then the hearts can come to Fr. Jack, Jennet (19 Carlton Ave LA13 5AT), or go straight to Debbie at the Chaplaincy department. For the knitters, there is a pattern available at <https://blog.createandcraft.tv/free-knitted-heart-pattern/> The hearts should be up to 3 inches or 8cm across at the widest point.

Resources : The Sunday Worship video is available on the St. James facebook page from Sunday morning.

Radio and TV : Radio Cumbria Morning Service at 8.00am
CandoFM (106.3) Faith in Furness at 10.30am
BBC Morning Worship at 10.15 on BBC1

For those who are online, the Church of England website has daily and Sunday resources to watch, download and join in with.

The website is : churchofengland.org

Daily Hope Prayer Line - 0800 804 8044 - A Church of England resource with hymns, prayers and reflections for especially for those who are not connected to the internet. *"With many in our country on lockdown, it's important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are."* Archbishop Justin.

DAILY PRAYER and BIBLE READINGS

SUNDAY *We give thanks that Jesus is the faithful and good shepherd protecting his sheep from evil and harm.*

MONDAY Acts 11:1-18, John 10:1-10
(English Saints and martyrs of the reformation Era)
Pray for the whole church witnessing to the resurrection behind the closed doors of lock-down.

TUESDAY Acts 11:19-26, John 10:22-30
Pray for the clergy of Barrow and Furness deaneries meeting online this morning.

WEDNESDAY Acts 12:24-13:5, John 12:44-50
Pray for all local businesses and leaders, especially for staff facing furlough or redundancy.

THURSDAY Acts 13:13-25, John 13:16-20
Pray for the staff of Furness General Hospital as they treat those suffering most from the virus.

FRIDAY Acts 13:26-33, John 14:1-6
(VE Day) Pray for all who work for co-operation and understanding across Europe in these challenging times.

SATURDAY Acts 13:44-52, John 14:7-14
Pray for our those working in our Nursing & Care Homes and their residents, especially those we know.

If you have prayer requests / thanksgivings, then please let Fr. Jack know either by email or 'phone.

NEXT SUNDAY

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 7:55-60, 1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14