

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice

of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



The Good Shepherd

The Parish Eucharist

for

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Sunday 25th April 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Online at zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer thoughts: There is no physical description of Jesus in the NT and we don't know what Jesus looked like. This is not surprising because the Jewish people had a tradition of not liking 'graven images' and so Jewish depictions of people around the first century are scarce. Actually, one of the earliest existing images of Jesus dates from the early third century and is a wall painting in the Catacomb of Callixtus, which depicts him as 'The Good Shepherd.'

Whilst we don't know what Jesus looked like it's clear from this Sunday's Gospel reading that he had no difficulty in describing himself and his ministry in terms of a peasant shepherd. In first century Palestine that meant a hard life of manual labour. Those fluffy romanticised depictions of shepherding are a far cry from what was a hard life on the edges of society. Shepherds lived and slept with their animals, had no facilities, and were viewed as unclean not only physically but also spiritually because there was no time to go to synagogue and keep the religious laws. Perhaps you had to be a certain type of person to be a shepherd. The life was beset with dangers from nature and threats from people. And shepherds had to be ready to put themselves in harm's way to protect their flock. Jesus used this image because the shepherd was the very opposite of some respectable and remote authority figure. His criticism of the leaders of the day was clear. They had proved themselves primarily interested in their own advantage. They had not taken proper care of the flock. They had not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured, or searched for the lost and brought back the strays. And they had governed the people harshly. This is not the 'stuff' people might think of as being religious, but that's the point. Jesus was telling the leaders that they were just not genuine and the people deserved better. They had had their chance and blown it. As a consequence they would be shepherds no more. Their time was up and there would be a new way in which God's love would be revealed to his people - by a shepherd who would be faithful and true. Jesus was making the point that God was intervening and he would look after the sheep himself and make sure they had pasture and safety, that the lost were found, the weak restored, and the injured healed. And there would be a new way of doing things and a new justice.

Being a good shepherd was not a 'career' move and it certainly was not a profession for the fainthearted. It entailed cost and meant being ready to risk one's life for the well-being of the flock. Of course, Jesus knew at that time that he would soon be faced with giving his own life on the cross.

Jesus' message in identifying with the 'Good Shepherd' is that he is no fair-weather friend and he will be with us when things get tough. That's what good shepherds do as Psalm 23 tells us: *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he maketh me to lie down in green pasture, he leadeth me beside still water, he restoreth my soul. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear nor evil for thou art with me, they rod and thy (protecting) staff they comfort me.*

In Jesus' day the shepherd would lead his flock through dangerous territory and call to them to follow. At night they might go into a pen and there might be several flocks penned up in one fold. In the morning the shepherd would again call to his sheep and each would follow the voice of their own shepherd. Jesus' message is that if we listen to his voice we will not find a theory or a religious idea, or even a creed by which to live, we will find him. His message is that he knows and cares for each one of us regardless of whether we are clever or messed up or frightened or lonely. So, this Good Shepherd Sunday seems like a good time to listen to what Jesus is saying to you and me. We can only guess what Jesus' face might look like, but we can see clearly his character and we know his voice. May God grant each one of us the time to be still and to listen, to trust in the Good Shepherd, and to love and care, not just in words, but in truth and action. And may we know that God is with us even in the valley of death. God bless, Paul

The Parish Eucharist for the Fourth Sunday of Easter 2021



From the Catacomb of Callixtus,
The Good Shepherd

The present rules and guidelines about attendance, singing & speaking in churches will be followed carefully. This Sunday only the priest, the musicians and the zoom operator can be at St John's church building.

HYMN

Love's redeeming work is done,
fought the fight, the battle won.
Lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er!
Lo, he sets in blood no more!

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!
Praise to thee by both be given:
thee we greet triumphant now;
hail, the Resurrection thou!

THE GATHERING

Priest In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The priest will introduce the Eucharist.

THE GREETING

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us. The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

All The Lord be with you
And also with you.

All Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

*We call to mind our sins to repent of them / turn from them and to ask forgiveness of God and each other.
The Invitation to Confession.*

My dear sisters and brothers, as we come together as God's family to celebrate the Easter mysteries, let us ask with confidence the Father's forgiveness for our sins, for he is full of gentleness and compassion.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

Priest Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life.
Lord, have mercy.
All Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins.
Christ, have mercy.
All Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you feed us with the living bread.
Lord, have mercy.
All Lord, have mercy.

The Absolution

+ Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins,
and bring you to everlasting life.

All Amen.

THE GLORIA

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Father!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Father!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to Christ Jesus!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to Christ Jesus!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Spirit!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Spirit!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray that the risen Christ will raise us up and renew our lives and our world.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The priest 'collects' our prayerful thoughts this Eastertide 2021.

Priest 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.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts'(The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING - THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 4: 8 - 12. - Read by Peter Tanner

Reader A reading from The Acts of the Apostles.

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 an invalid, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would 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 all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;

John 10: 14

I know my own sheep and my own know me.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING - ST JOHN'S GOSPEL 10: 11 - 18.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you .**

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

All **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.'

At the end of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE SERMON - Fr Derek.

We are a Eucharistic community in word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. Our priest now reflects with us on the readings of the day relating them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary life.

After the sermon there is a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

All **We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.**

We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.

We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for the needs of the Church's mission and for all people. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his intercessions before the Father for the needs of his Church and of all people. Our intercessions flow from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; for the departed. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God's saving love.

Priest: In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with the Risen Christ, let us pray to the Father.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the resurrection. Shed the light of the Risen Christ on the world and give grace to us to live to share his Gospel. We pray your blessing on Justin our Archbishop, Steven our Bishop, Olivia our area Bishop, and the mission and ministry of your Church in this benefice - our parishes and our schools of St Mary's and St John's.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen. Give grace to our Government and our District and Village Councils and to all in authority that they may govern with justice, wisdom and compassion and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless our families and friends and all those you have given us to love and care for. May our love and care for one another witness to the risen Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit...

May the love of the Risen Christ bring them comfort and the hope of the resurrection give them peace.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you all who have gone before us...

We pray, in the hope of the resurrection, that we may be united for ever in the joy of heaven.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we rejoice in the communion of the Blessed Mother, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all your Saints, and we commend all creation to your unfailing love.

Priest Merciful Father

All Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful - a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest 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. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

Priest **BREAD**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

WINE

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our gratitude and our dedication to your service.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts. The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Priest Amen.

Risen Lord Jesus Christ, may we recognize you in the breaking of the bread as the fire of love that burns within us, that we may bring the light of your love to all the world.

All **Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

The Preface praises God for his mighty acts:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. From sunrise to sunset this day is holy, for Christ has risen from the tomb and scattered the darkness of death with light that will not fade. Thus the risen Lord walks with your gathered people, unfolds for us your word, and makes himself known in the breaking of the bread. And though the night will overtake this day you summon us to live in endless light, the never-ceasing sabbath of the Lord. And so, with choirs of angels and with all the heavenly host, we proclaim your glory and join their unending song of praise:

The Acclamation

All **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.

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness. Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory. As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the night he gave himself up for us all he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

+ Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying:

+ Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting forth from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

Form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cries of our hearts.

Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high to do your will.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with the Blessed Mother Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all your Saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Priest Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us:

All **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.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17) Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

Priest We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.**

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when communion can only be given in one 'kind' when we can come to church.

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ **Amen.**

HYMN DURING HOLY COMMUNION

**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.**

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray

The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom. We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest 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.

All **Amen.**

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Priest Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you.

All **and also with you.**

THE BLESSING

Priest God, the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you the way of everlasting life.

All **Amen.**

God the Son, who in conquering death has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

All **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples, empower you for God's service and fill you with Christ's peace.

All **Amen.**

+ And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

HYMN

**Brother, sister let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.**

**We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.**

**Brother, sister let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.**

