



The Smestow Vale Team Ministry
St Benedict's and the Venerable Bede
Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 3rd May

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your commands,
that all your people may be gathered into one flock
to the glory of God the Father

The Church begins to grow in faith and numbers.

Many were baptized and were added to the community. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2.42-47

Jesus the Good Shepherd

Jesus said to the Pharisees: '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. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again

Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

John 10:1-10.

A Reflection for the Fourth Week of Eastertide.

Good Shepherd" leadership.

Choosing our leaders is a big responsibility: as our present situation has demonstrated, you never know what they might be called upon to do on our behalf. In the Gospel reading today, Jesus speaks about the kind of leadership he chooses to exercise: "Good Shepherd" leadership.

Don't imagine that being a shepherd was easy- shepherds in Jesus's time were plucky and alert, they knew their sheep well - protecting their precious animals depended on it: guiding them on safe paths, warding off wolves, chasing away scorpions, searching for them when they were lost- the kind of leader who leads from the front and, when necessary, lies down at the gate of the sheepfold to keep predators out and the sheep in.

Jesus tells us he is the gate of the sheepfold: sheep

in his fold are protected- they will never be snatched away from the him. He is the Good Shepherd: when we wander or lose our way, even doing things which disappoint him, Jesus will come looking for us- he won't abandon us, even if we abandon him. That's so reassuring... Jesus said his sheep know his voice- do we? Knowing his voice requires us to remain close to him; to "bond" with him. Then, when he speaks to us, we will recognise his call. Through prayer, reading God's word in the Bible, being faithful in our worship, when we can- these are the ways to make sure we recognise him when he calls.

Recognising his call is so important, for surely Jesus is the one leader in the whole of history whom we can trust with our lives: the one who sacrificed everything to bring us to God, who gave up his life and, because of his obedience, has had his life most gloriously restored. Could there be anyone better to follow ?

Please remember those who have asked for our prayers Sarah Stephenson, David Kingston, Lisa, Julia McCormick, Morgan, Michael Concannon, Heather Gent, Jean, Joan, and Margaret Hatton

Those who have died recently and their families: Barrie Mann, , Revd Stewart Tyler, Margaret Sthamer, Tess Morgan, Joyce Cort, Phyllis Huntley, Eileen Bennett, Eric Bills, Barrie Bailey, Iris Burgess, Jean Nightingale.

Prayer during the Week

Sunday

Pray that we may seek and find Jesus, the door to eternal life, (John 10: 9)

Monday

Pray for farmers and stockmen, caring for their animals in these times when money is scarce.

Tuesday

Pray for providers of food, that they may find labourers to bring in the crops.

Wednesday

Pray that our faith will give us determination to follow the lockdown rules.

Thursday

Pray for all those we would love to visit, were it possible to do so.

Friday

Pray for victims of domestic violence, that they may find safe places.

Saturday

Pray for those researching or trialling vaccines and treatments for the virus.

Key Workers and those who are ill

Do you know any Key Workers or anyone who has Serious health issues and who would value our Prayers ? please let Paul know, first names only if preferred, (prepbrown@gmail.com) so that they can be included in my private prayers or on "Keeping in Touch" You can also ask if they would like to be included in our confidential Prayer Chain.

Sarah.

It is with regret that given the present very difficult situation, as our children's groups are unable to meet, we have furloughed Sarah our Children's Worker.

Funerals

Did you know that during the pandemic we have been following the National Church advice and not making any charge for funerals.

Sunday Worship

The Rector has been trying to get up to date this week with some help from Preb Ben from Penn.

There will be a service led by Paul on Facebook this Sunday from 10.00am.

Email Addresses

Have you recently gone on email to help you keep in touch with friends and family ? If so, please let Maxine know in the Parish Office and then we can send out Keeping in Touch electronically.

Share the Good News

You are very welcome to share Keeping in Touch with others. If you know of anyone who would like it emailing to them direct please let Maxine know.

Sunday Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Easter 10.45am BBC 1

Please join in prayer and worship on Sunday Morning The Very Reverend Kathy Jones leads the service for the fourth Sunday of Easter from Bangor Cathedral in Wales, with hymns recorded for Songs of Praise in March 2018.

