

The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Year B



God has shown great love  
in what he has done for us in Jesus, the Good Shepherd,  
our one and only Saviour

## All Age Mass for the Parish Family

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024

10.15 am



## *Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church*

Happy Easter! The Gospel reading this morning presents Jesus as the good shepherd who knows his sheep (his disciples) intimately, and is known by them. Unlike the hired hand, he is willing to do anything to protect his sheep against the wolves (a traditional image for false teachers). The 'other sheep' are the Gentiles who through the missionary outreach of the Church will become part of his flock.

Jesus goes on to stress that he is laying down his life freely. His life is not being taken from him; he is giving it in loving fulfilment of the Father's will. Jesus saw his whole life as an act of obedience to the Father.

But his death will not be the end. He will take up his life again (in the resurrection), and thus triumph over evil. Jesus always saw the cross and the glory together. He knew that he must die; and he trusted that the Father would not abandon him in death.

*It is our custom to spend some time in quiet preparation before the liturgy begins, and save further conversation until we meet socially for refreshments afterwards. The following reflection, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:*

### Reflection

All work is empty save when done with love.  
If you cannot work with love but only with distaste,  
it is better that you should leave your work,  
sit at the gate of the temple  
and take alms from those who work with joy.  
For if you bake bread with indifference,  
you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half of a person's hunger.  
And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes,  
your grudge distils a poison in the wine.  
Work is love made visible.

Kahil Gibran

# Order of Service

## ¶ Gathering to Worship God

*All stand at the sound of the bell*

### Call to Worship

*Priest* Look down, O Lord from heaven upon your flock and lambs;  
bless us as we gather to offer our worship.  
May all who have received your sign, O Christ, on their foreheads  
know your care and protection as we journey towards your risen  
life.

### Hymn

*The flags are presented*

*All* Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now,  
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,  
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
and find the way, the life, the truth,  
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

*Words Brian Wren (b. 1936)*

*Music Truro*

† In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
*All*      **Amen.**

*All*      The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

## The Easter Proclamation

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

## Introduction

This Sunday is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. Of all the images we have of Jesus, that of the Good Shepherd is probably the loveliest.

Jesus says, 'The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.' Let us pause for a moment to see how we respond to the love of the Good Shepherd.

*Silence is kept*

## Washing away our Sins

Father God,  
your gift of water brings new life to the earth;  
in baptism it is a sign of the washing away of our sins  
and the gift of life in heaven.

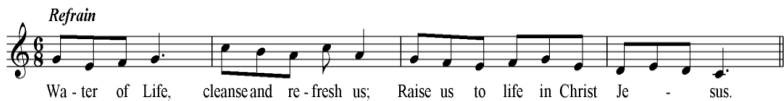
Bless † this water.

Renew the river of life within us,  
that we may be free from sin,  
healthy and strong to follow you,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*     **Amen.**

*The congregation is sprinkled with holy water*

## Water of Life



*Choir*     All you who thirst, come to the waters;  
and you will never be thirsty again.     **Refrain**

As rain from heaven, so is God's word,  
it waters the earth and brings forth life.     **Refrain**

Dying with Christ, so we shall rise with him,  
death shall no longer have power over us.     **Refrain**

Turn to the Lord, cast off your wickedness,  
you will find peace in his infinite love.     **Refrain**

## God's Forgiveness

*Priest*      May the God of love and power  
forgive † and free you from your sins,  
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,  
and raise you to new life with Jesus our Lord.

*All*            **Amen.**

## Glory to God

*All*            **Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## The Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

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.

*All*     **Amen.**

*All sit*

## ¶ Hearing and Responding to the Word of God

### First Reading

*Reader* A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is

    "the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;  
    it has become the cornerstone."

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.'

Acts 4:8-12

This is the word of the Lord.

*All*     **Thanks be to God.**

*All stand*

# Gospel Reading

## Acclamation

1. Choir  
2. Choir and Congregation

Al - le - lu - ia.

*Choir* I am the Good Shepherd, says the Lord;  
I know my own and my own know me.

*All* **Alleluia ...**

*All* The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

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

Glo - ry to you, O Lord, al - le - lu - ia.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care 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 the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

John 10.11-18



This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All



Hymn

All

**Sing the gospel of salvation,  
tell it out to all the earth;  
to the ones so long excluded,  
speak of hope and human worth.  
All the darkness of injustice  
cannot dim salvation's light,  
for the outcast and exploited  
count as worthy in God's sight.**

**Christ, the one eternal Shepherd,  
calls creation to rejoice,  
and the victims of oppression  
thrill to hear salvation's voice.  
All who recognise the Saviour  
take their place within the fold,  
there in perfect truth and freedom,  
life's eternal joys to hold.**

**See, the host that none can number  
gathers in from every side,  
once the victims of injustice,  
now redeemed and glorified.  
Fear and weeping here are ended,  
hunger and oppression cease.  
Now the Lamb becomes the shepherd!  
Now begins the reign of peace!**

*Words* Michael Forster (born 1946)

*Music* Pleading Saviour

## Talk / Presentation

*All sit*

*The themes of the day are briefly explored*

## Our Prayers to God

*All kneel*

*Priest* Blessed are you, Lord our God.  
When we were lost in our sin  
you sent our Lord as the Good Shepherd to bring us home.  
He descended into the depths to raise us to the heights;  
he tasted death for us to know eternal life.  
Blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Intercessor* We give thanks for all who are called to  
be shepherds of your people,  
all who are guides and protectors.  
We remember bishops and especially Bishops Debbie and John;  
We pray for all priests and especially our own clergy.  
Bless all who teach us the faith  
and help us to walk in the ways of holiness.

*All* The Lord is my shepherd;  
**I shall not fear.**

We ask you to give courage and strength to  
all who in the emergency services.  
We pray for all ambulance crews and paramedics,  
for air and sea rescue services and for coastguards.  
We remember the police and the fire crews.  
Bless, O Lord, all who work for the relief of  
poverty and suffering among the poor of our world.

*All* The Lord is my shepherd;  
**I shall not fear.**

We give you thanks for the safety and comfort of our homes.  
We ask you to protect our loved ones  
and guide them in the ways of peace.  
We pray for peace in Gaza and Ukraine,  
and for the humanitarian and aid agencies.  
Give wisdom and love to all who work in social services.  
Comfort all who are afraid, lonely, and feel unwanted.

*All* The Lord is my shepherd;  
**I shall not fear.**

God of love,  
we remember all who have been involved in accidents this week.  
We pray for all who have been injured and those who are bereaved.  
We pray for those who have gone into hospital  
and all who are ill at home. (The acutely ill ... )

*All* The Lord is my shepherd;  
**I shall not fear.**

Good and gracious God,  
you have rescued us from the darkness of death  
and opened for us the way to eternal life.  
We bring before you those who have died recently ...,  
and those whose anniversary of death occurs this week ... .  
We pray that they may rest with you in your kingdom.  
Lord, grant them your love and light.

*All* The Lord is my shepherd;  
**I shall not fear.**

*Priest* Merciful Father,  
*All* **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

# ¶ Preparing to meet Jesus in Bread and Wine

Hymn

*All stand*

*The bread and wine are presented to the presiding priest  
at the dais step*

*A collection is taken. Please give as you are able.*

*The children are invited to stand either side of the altar.*

*All*

**The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want:  
he makes me down to lie  
in pastures green; he leadeth me  
the quiet waters by.  
in pastures green; he leadeth me  
the quiet waters by.**

**My soul he doth restore again,  
and me to walk doth make  
within the paths of righteousness,  
e'en for his own name's sake.  
within the paths of righteousness,  
e'en for his own name's sake.**

**Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,  
yet will I fear none ill:  
for thou art with me, and thy rod  
and staff me comfort still.  
for thou art with me, and thy rod  
and staff me comfort still.**

My table thou hast furnishèd  
in presence of my foes;  
my head thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.  
my head thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life  
shall surely follow me;  
and in God's house for evermore  
my dwelling-place shall be.  
and in God's house for evermore  
my dwelling-place shall be.

Words Scottish Psalter, 1650

Music Brother James's Air

## Offering the Bread and Wine

O God, you gave us this sacred meal  
and opened to us a share in your heavenly life;  
grant, we pray, that we may come to know your truth,  
and make it our own by a worthy way of life.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*      **Amen.**

## Prayer over the Bread and Wine

*All*      The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

*All*      Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

*All*      Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

*Children* Why is it right to give thanks and praise?  
*Adults* **Listen, and we will hear.**

Lord of all life, you created the universe,  
where all living things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth,  
to discover and to cherish.

You give us sun and moon and star-lit sky,  
everything that gives us light,  
light for our eyes, our hearts, our minds.

In this Easter season  
we celebrate with joyful hearts your risen life.  
May we come to know you as our Good Shepherd  
who searches, cares and protects his flock,  
and leads us safely home towards heaven  
to join in the song of the angels:

*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 thank you, loving Father,  
because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son.  
He gave his life for us on the cross  
and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine  
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

*Children* Why do we share this bread and wine?  
*Adults* **Listen, and we will hear.**

On the night before he died,  
when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread.  
He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples,  
saying:

'This is my body, given for you.  
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine,  
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup  
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.  
As you feed us with these gifts,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

*Children*      How do we follow Jesus Christ?  
*Adults*        **Listen, and we will hear.**

Help us, Father, to love one another,  
as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended,  
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Mary and the Apostles  
we give you glory,  
through Jesus Christ,  
in the strength of the Spirit,  
today and for ever.

*All*            **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

We see God's love for us in the love of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Let us pray to the God of love in the words that Jesus 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.**

## Sign of Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, 'There are other sheep that are not of this fold. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd.'

Take pity on your flock, dispersed by sin and division. Gather it together, so that we may enjoy the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

*All*      **Alleluia. The peace of the Lord be always with you  
and also with you. Alleluia.**

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.



*The children and their leaders return to their seats*

***Please kneel***

## Breaking of the Bread

*All* Lord, we died with you on the cross.  
**Now we share in your risen life.**

## Invitation to Communion

*All* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
**Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

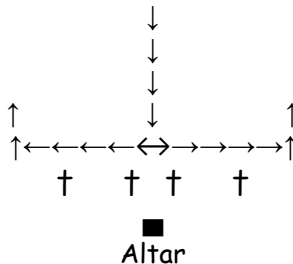
*The clergy and other ministers receive Holy Communion*

## Giving of Communion

The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.

*Baptized persons who are communicant members of other Churches are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion, as shown below.*

*Alternatively, if you wish to receive a blessing, please bring this booklet with you.*



## Spiritual Communion - *for those at home*

### Act of Reception

*All* In union, blessed Jesus,  
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church  
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,

*(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)*

I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,  
for creation and all the blessings of this life,  
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,  
and resurrection,  
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

*(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)*

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,  
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,  
I pray you to come into my heart.  
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,  
my soul, and my mind.  
Let nothing separate me from you;  
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,  
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.  
Amen.

*The choir sing Lamb of God*

### Motet

This joyful Eastertide

*arranged by William Harris (1883-1973)*

## Thanksgiving after Communion

Let us pray:

*All stand*

*All*      **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.

## Hymn

*The flags are returned to their bearers*

*All*              **Alleluia, alleluia,**  
                    **give thanks to the risen Lord;**  
                    **alleluia, alleluia,**  
                    **give praise to His name.**

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth,  
He is the King of creation:**

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth,  
Jesus has died and has risen:**

**We have been crucified with Christ;  
Now we shall live for ever:**

**God has proclaimed the just reward:  
Life for all men, alleluia:**

Come, let us praise the living God,  
Joyfully sing to our Saviour:  
*Alleluia, alleluia,*  
*give thanks to the risen Lord;*  
*alleluia, alleluia,*  
*give praise to His name.*

*Words Donald Fishel (b. 1950) Music Alleluia No.1*

## Notices for the Community

*All sit*

## ¶ Going out to Serve God

*All* The Lord be with you  
and also with you.

*All stand*

## God's Blessing

*All* May you be blessed with an unshakable belief in the love of Christ,  
the Good Shepherd.  
**Amen.**

*All* May you find joy in belonging to his flock.  
**Amen.**

*All* May you imitate his love by the concern you show for others.  
**Amen.**

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

*All* **Amen.**

## Sending Out

*Deacon*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

*All*

In the name of Christ, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

*All are asked to turn toward the Madonna and Child sculpture*

## Regina Caeli

*All* **Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluya** *(9 rings)*  
**He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluya**  
**As he promised, hath arisen, alleluya**  
**Pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluya.**

*All* **Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluya,**  
**for the Lord is risen indeed, alleluya.** *(9 rings)*

God of life, you have given joy to the world  
by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary,  
bring us to the happiness of eternal life.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

## Music

Toccata [Symphonie V, Final)      *Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)*

*The procession departs*

*Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary.*

*Café Guides are now serving refreshments in the parish centre, please do join us.*

This evening at 5.30 pm

## Choral Evensong and Benediction

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### *Collection - responding to God's generosity*

We invite you to make a monetary offering towards the ministry and mission of St Matthew's Church. You may do so using any of the following methods:

**Cash, cheques, stewardship envelopes** - using the receptacle provided at the back of church. UK tax-payers are asked to use the gift-aid envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may claim an additional 25% of the donation from the government, at no additional cost to the donor. If you wish to give regularly, please contact the Parish Office (01604 791251) and ask for a member of our Stewardship Team.

**Contactless giving** - using the terminal provided. Just press the button for the amount you wish to give - £5, £10, or £20, and then hold your bank card over the reader.

**Giving on your smart phone** - using the QR code printed below. It gives you the option of any amount, Gift Aid, and making a regular payment.

**Giving online** - click the donate button on the parish website or Facebook page and follow the instructions.

Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.



Our thanks are due to 32<sup>nd</sup> St Matthew's Guides, Brownies  
and Rainbows who have generously financed  
the production of this week's service booklet.

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**Please take this booklet home  
as an aid to prayer and reflection during the week,  
and then re-cycle it.**

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St Matthew's Parish Church, The Parish Office, 27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY  
Tel: 01604 791251 [www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](http://www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk) [office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)