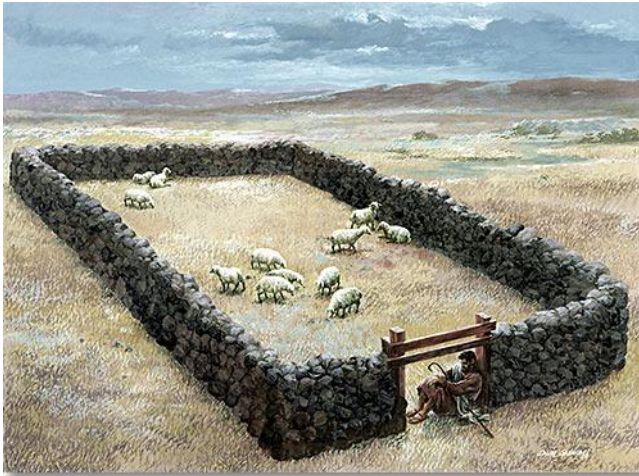


The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Year A



*Jesus said, 'I am the gate of the sheepfold.  
Anyone who enters by me will be saved.'*

## The Parish Mass

Sunday 26 April 2026

10.15 am

# Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church



**Safeguarding** St Matthew's is committed to providing a safe environment for all who come. If you have any concerns, please speak with one of our welcomers or a churchwarden who may be identified by their lanyard. They will be happy to help you.

**Live streaming** Please note that this service is being streamed. You may sit where you wish. If, however, you prefer not to be seen online, please sit in a side aisle. The administration of Holy Communion will not be shown.

**GDPR** Some of St Matthew's services (most Sunday mornings and some special services) are live-streamed or recorded for those who cannot attend church in person. Under GDPR, the church must gain the consent of anyone whose image may be captured, as this constitutes collection of "personal data". This includes clergy, readers/intercessors, musicians and congregation. Whilst every attempt is made not to capture the faces of members of the congregation, this may occasionally happen if people turn around or move around the church during the service. The exception is communion, when the congregation is not filmed. The side aisles and back of the nave are so far as possible film-free areas not covered by the camera. Any-one whose personal data is collected must give their consent. Consent forms are available both in church and on the website. The full policy can be read on our parish website or on the noticeboards in church.

**Toilet and baby changing facilities** may be found at the base of the church tower. There is also a small servery.

**For younger children** In the north aisle (nearest to Collingwood Road), a carpeted area equipped with age-specific Christian resources is provided. Please feel free to make use of these facilities.



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## Collection – ‘Building a Generous Church’



### Our response to God’s generosity

We believe in a generous God, who longs for us to share his generosity with others. A generous life is therefore a hallmark of our faith and a testament to it, as the more generous we are, the more we reflect the generous God we believe in. Generosity is, therefore, at the heart of our faith, and our own generosity is a sure sign of our faith in action. Generosity is a spiritual gift, and we need to encourage people to seek this gift as they grow in their faith. The ministry and mission of St Matthew’s is largely funded through the incredible generosity of those who give to it.

\* \* \* \* \*

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. If you are a taxpayer please use the envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may also benefit from the Gift Aid (an extra 25p for every pound given) associated with your giving.

**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.



## Good Shepherd Sunday

On this Fourth Sunday of Easter, we reflect on the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd. In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks of the sheepfold, where each shepherd calls his own sheep and leads them out. In this image, we are reminded that Jesus knows each of us personally and calls us by name. He leads us with care and faithfulness, not as strangers, but as those who belong to him.

Unlike those who come only to harm, Jesus comes that we may have life in all its fullness. He is both our shepherd and the gate, through whom we have access to God and the life he offers.

Our reading from Acts shows the early Christian community united in prayer, fellowship, and generosity - a model of what it means to follow the voice of Christ together.

Good Shepherd Sunday also invites us to pray for those called to pastoral ministry, that they may reflect the care and compassion of Christ.

As we gather for this Parish Mass, may we hear the voice of our Shepherd, follow where he leads, and share in the abundant life he gives.

*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 may be found helpful:*

### Reflection

Life is a gift from God, a gift to be lived and enjoyed.  
It is possible to enjoy life to the full  
while being devout and religious at the same time.  
Those who live fully will not feel cheated at death.  
Lord, give us the kind of faith that will enable us to live out joyfully  
the mystery of our fragile human condition,  
which sees us suspended between earth and heaven,  
and between time and eternity.

### Setting

The Salisbury Service

Grayston Ives b.1948

## Order of Service

### ¶ The Gathering

§ **Stand** at the sound of the bell

### Hymn

§ *The procession enters and the altar is honoured with incense*

*All*

**YE** choirs of new Jerusalem,  
Your sweetest notes employ,  
The Paschal victory to hymn  
In strains of holy joy.

How Judah's Lion burst his chains,  
And crushed the serpent's head;  
And brought with him, from death's domains,  
The long-imprisoned dead.

From hell's devouring jaws the prey  
Alone our leader bore;  
His ransomed hosts pursue their way  
Where he hath gone before.

Triumphant in his glory now  
His sceptre ruleth all,  
Earth, heaven, and hell before him bow,  
And at his footstool fall.

While joyful thus his praise we sing,  
His mercy we implore,  
Into his palace bright to bring  
And keep us evermore.

**All glory to the Father be,  
All glory to the Son,  
All glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,  
While endless ages run. Alleluya! Amen.**

Words Chorus novae Jerusalem  
St Fulbert of Chartres c960-1028  
tr Robert Campbell 1814-1868

Music St Fulbert  
Henry John Gauntlett 1805-1876

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

## The Greeting

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

## The Easter Acclamation

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

*The service is introduced*

## Invitation to Confession

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, says to us, 'I know my sheep.  
They listen to my voice and follow me.'  
Let us reflect for a moment on our failure to respond  
to the love and care of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

*A pause for reflection*

## Confession

*All*      **God our Father,  
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,  
you create us from nothing and give us life.  
You give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.  
You do not turn your face from us,  
nor cast us aside.  
We confess that we have sinned against you.  
We have wounded your love  
and marred your image in us.  
Restore us for the sake of your Son,  
and bring us to heavenly joy,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Kyries

Lord Jesus, you call us to be your people, the sheep of your flock.  
Kyrie eleison.

*All*      **Kyrie eleison.**

You help us to listen to your voice and to follow you.  
Christe eleison.

*All*      **Christe eleison.**

You lead us to the green pastures of eternal life.  
Kyrie eleison.

*All*      **Kyrie eleison.**

## Absolution

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

*All*      **Amen.**

## Gloria in Excelsis

*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 Collect

Let us pray.

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.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ,  
to discover further the meaning of this joyful Eastertide,  
let us listen attentively to the Good News of Christ's resurrection.

§ Sit

## ¶ The Liturgy of the Word

### The Acts of the Apostles

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

The people 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

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm



The Lord\_ is my shep-herd, there is no thing I shall want. The



Lord\_ is my shep-herd, there is no thing I shall want.

*Choir* The Lord is my shepherd;  
therefore can I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures  
and leads me beside still waters. **Response**





**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

## Prayers of the Faithful

*Priest* God brought Jesus back from the dead  
and made him the chief Shepherd of the flock.  
Let us place our needs before him with confidence and faith.

§ *kneel*

*After each petition*

*Intercessor* Hear us and help us,  
*All* **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*After the final petition*

*Priest* God of compassion,  
you sent your Son into the world that we might have life.  
Grant that we may follow him faithfully on earth,  
and come to enjoy eternal life in heaven,  
where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

§ *Stand*

# ¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Sign of Peace

Lord Jesus, you said to your apostles, 'I am the gate of the sheepfold. Anyone who enters through me will be saved and find pasture.' Alleluia.

*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 Offertory

§ *The Gifts are presented to the presiding priest and the altar is prepared*

## Hymn

§ *A monetary collection is taken and placed under the altar.  
For alternative ways of giving please refer to the front of this booklet.  
Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.*

*All*           **COME, ye faithful, raise the anthem,  
          Cleave the skies with shouts of praise;  
Sing to him who found the ransom,  
          Ancient of eternal days,  
God eternal, Word incarnate,  
          Whom the heaven of heaven obeys.**

**Ere he raised the lofty mountains,  
          Formed the seas, or built the sky,  
Love eternal, free, and boundless,  
          Forced the Lord of life to die,  
Lifted up the Prince of princes  
          On the throne of Calvary.**

There, for us and our redemption,  
See him all his life-blood pour!  
There he wins our full salvation,  
Dies that we may die no more;  
Then, arising, lives for ever,  
Reigning where he was before.

Now on those eternal mountains  
Stands the sapphire throne, all bright,  
With the ceaseless alleluyas  
Which they raise, the sons of light;  
Sion's people tell his praises,  
Victor after heard-won fight.

Bring your harps, and bring your incense,  
Sweep the string and pour the lay;  
Let the earth proclaim his wonders,  
King of that celestial day;  
He the Lamb once slain is worthy,  
Who was dead, and lives for ay.

Laud and honour to the Father,  
Laud and honour to the Son,  
Laud and honour to the Spirit,  
Ever three and ever one,  
Consubstantial, coeternal,  
While unending ages run. Amen.

Words Job Hupton 1762-1849  
and John Mason Neale 1818-1866

Music Neander  
melody set to 'Unser Herrscher'  
in Joachim Neander 1650-1680 *Alpha und Omega*, 1680

## Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,  
that our sacrifice 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.**

## Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord,  
grant that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries,  
so that the renewal constantly at work within us  
may be the causing of our unending joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*     **Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer

*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.**

It is indeed right and just, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
almighty and eternal Father,  
and in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts  
the memory of your wonderful works.

For by the mystery of his passion  
Jesus Christ, your risen Son,  
has conquered the powers of death and hell  
and restored in men and women the image of your glory.  
He has placed them once more in paradise  
and opened to them the gate of life eternal.

And so, in the joy of this Passover,  
earth and heaven resound with gladness,  
while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation  
sing for ever the hymn of your glory:

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.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will,  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All



Christ has died, Christ is ri - sen, Christ will come \_\_\_\_\_ a - gain.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics are: "Christ has died, Christ is ri - sen, Christ will come \_\_\_\_\_ a - gain." The word "come" is followed by a long horizontal line, indicating a sustained note or a long pause.

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,  
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world,  
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming in glory,  
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.  
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,  
we bring before you this bread and this cup  
and we thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people  
and gather into one in your kingdom  
all who share this one bread and one cup,  
so that we, in the company Mary, the Virgin Mother of God,  
Saint Matthew, and all the saints,  
may praise and glorify you for ever,  
through 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



A- men.

*The Blessed Sacrament is elevated. Bells are rung.*

§ *Kneel*

## The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in God's new creation,  
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught 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.**

## Breaking of the Bread

Jesus says, I am the bread of life,  
whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

*All* **Lord, our hearts hunger for you;  
give us this bread always.**

## Agnus Dei

*All* **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

## Invitation to Communion

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

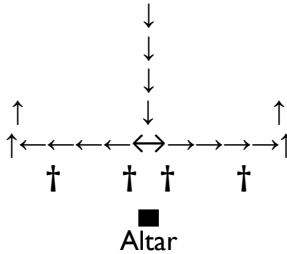
*The clergy receive Holy Communion*

# 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 indicated below.*

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



Spiritual Communion – *for those watching 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.

## Motet

*Choir* Because the Lord is my shepherd

*Music* Christopher Walker b.1947

## Hymn

*All* **FAITHFUL Shepherd, feed me  
In the pastures green;  
Faithful Shepherd, lead me  
Where thy steps are seen.**

**Hold me fast, and guide me  
In the narrow way;  
So, with thee beside me,  
I shall never stray.**

**Daily bring me nearer  
To the heavenly shore;  
May thy faith grow clearer,  
May I love thee more.**

**Hallow every pleasure,  
Every gift and pain:  
Be thyself my treasure,  
Though none else I gain.**

**Day by day prepare me,  
As thou seest best,  
Then let angels bear me  
To thy promised rest.**

## Prayer after Communion

§ *All sit for a period of personal reflection and thanksgiving*

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

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.**

## Hymn

*All*

**NOW is eternal life,  
If risen with Christ we stand,  
In him to life reborn,  
And held within his hand;  
No more we fear death's ancient dread,  
In Christ arisen from the dead.**

**For God, the living God,  
Stooped down to man's estate;  
By death destroying death,  
Christ opened wide life's gate:  
He lives, who died; he reigns on high;  
Who lives in him shall never die.**

**Unfathomed love divine,  
Reign thou within my heart;  
From thee nor depth nor height,  
Nor life nor death can part;  
Our life is hid with God in thee,  
Now and through all eternity.**

Words George Wallace Briggs 1875-1959

Music Christchurch  
Charles Steggall 1826-1905

## Notices for the Community

§ Sit

### ¶ Sending Out

§ Stand

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

### Solemn Blessing

*All* God the Father,  
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,  
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.  
**Amen.**

*All* God the Son,  
who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,  
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.  
**Amen.**

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

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

## Sung Dismissal

*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.

§ Please turn to face 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.**

God of life, you have given joy to the world (9 rings)  
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 The Easter Hymn

## Organ Voluntary

Marcia Eroica Op 189, ii *Charles Villiers Stanford 1852-1924*

§ Please remain standing until the procession has departed

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

§ Refreshments are served in the parish centre, please do join us

§ If you are a newcomer to the parish or area, please introduce yourself to one of the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.

This evening at 5.30 pm

## Congregational Evensong

Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 5  
who has generously financed  
the production of this week's service booklet.

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

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