

# The Good Shepherd



**Eastriggs 21st April 2024**

# The Good Shepherd

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**Call to Worship** The king Of Love

**Hymn** CH4 355 You Lord Are Both Lamb And Shepherd

**Approach** Astray

**Address** Little Boy Blue

**Hymn** CH4 1 How Blest Are They That Do Not Stray

**Readings** Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

**Hymn** CH4255 Father Hear The Prayer We Offer

**Intercession** Shepherd Lord

**Shepherd Lord, in your service**

*Guide us in your way*

**Sermon** The Good Shepherd

**Offering** Good Shepherd

**Hymn** CH4 462 The King Of Love My Shepherd Is

**Benediction** The Lord's Flock

**Call to Worship** The king Of Love

The king of love our shepherd is

Come let us gather as his flock

The king of love our shepherd is

Let us follow in his way

The king of love our shepherd is

Come, let us bring our praises and prayers

For the Lord is King

Let us gather in worship

## Hymn CH4 355 You Lord Are Both Lamb And Shepherd

You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.  
You, Lord, are both prince and slave.  
You, peacemaker and swordbringer  
Of the way you took and gave.  
You the everlasting instant;  
You, whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain,  
Stripped of might upon the cross,  
Shining in eternal glory,  
Beggar'd by a soldier's toss,  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are both gift and cost.

You, who walk each day beside us,  
Sit in power at God's side.  
You, who preach a way that's narrow,  
Have a love that reaches wide.  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are our pilgrim guide.

Worthy is our earthly Jesus!  
Worthy is our cosmic Christ!  
Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.  
Worthy still your peace and strife.  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are our death and life.  
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.  
You, who are our death and our life.

## **Approach Astray**

Father, Creator, Lord  
Maker of all that is  
Your servant David called you his shepherd  
The shepherd who loves his sheep  
For you are there for us in times of trouble  
You guide us on the paths of life  
All we have is at your hands  
And you offer us an eternal home with you  
So we rejoice in your love for us  
A love revealed in your son  
The good shepherd who guides us in your way  
But we go astray  
He taught us to love one another  
That we fulfil your commandments when we do that  
That we are at our best when we look after each other  
But we don't  
We find reasons to hate others  
We find reasons not to care  
We go astray  
Shepherd Lord, forgive us...

Your son came to us as the Prince of Peace  
And taught us to love our enemies  
To turn the other cheek and put down our swords  
That we are at our best when we live in peace  
But we don't  
We divide ourselves into tribes  
We watch the news and it is filled with war  
We have even taken up arms in your name  
We go astray  
Shepherd Lord forgive us...

Each of us in our own ways  
In our times of weakness and temptation  
Each of us has times of selfishness  
Of hard-heartedness, of greed, of spite  
Times when we have been less than we could have been  
We go astray  
Shepherd Lord forgive us...

Forgive us and guide us always  
To follow in the way of your son  
In the way of our shepherd  
To live in the ways he taught us  
To be his flock and to tread his path  
To pray as he prayed, saying these words

## **Address Little Boy Blue**

Come little boy blue, come blow your horn  
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn  
Where is the boy who looks after the sheep ?  
He's under the haystack fast asleep

Does he not matter? The flock go astray  
Does he shrug his shoulders, "I'm here for the pay"  
Are we here for the hymns, the stillness and prayer  
Not the challenge to leave and go out to care?

Come Jesus and walk before us always  
Guiding our actions and words every day  
Inspire us to be a good shepherd to sheep  
Beguiled by comfort and fast asleep

## **Hymn CH4 1 How Blest Are They That Do Not Stray**

How blest are those that do not stray  
Led by the wicked's talk  
Who will not with the sinful stand  
Nor sit where scoffers mock

The teaching of the Lord their God  
They follow with delight  
And meditate upon his word  
With gladness day and night

They flourish like well-watered trees  
Set by a riverside  
Whose fruit matures, whose leaves remain  
They prosper and abide

The wicked, like the straw and chaff  
By wind blown far away  
Can have no place among the just  
Nor stand on judgement day

The Lord will guard the righteous well  
He knows the way they take  
But doomed to perish is the way  
The wicked undertake

## Readings Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

## 1 John 3:16-24

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us--and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us

## John 10:11-18

"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."



## **Hymn CH4255 Father Hear The Prayer We Offer**

Father, hear the prayer we offer:  
not for ease that prayer shall be,  
but for strength that we may ever  
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures  
do we ask our way to be;  
but the steep and rugged pathway  
may we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters  
would we idly rest and stay;  
but would smite the living fountains  
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,  
in our wanderings be our guide;  
through endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be thou at our side.

## **Intercession Shepherd Lord**

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

*Guide us in your way*

We gather here, your flock  
As other sheep gather in other folds  
Ready to be led forth  
To go from here in your service  
To share your love with others

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

To serve those who are hurting  
Father, your son came into this world  
To bring healing and wholeness and love  
We bring before you those who are sick  
And who long for healing  
We bring those who are broken  
And who long for wholeness  
We bring those who are lonely  
And long for love  
We bring those we know...

Where we may heal or bring wholeness or love

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

To serve the cause of peace  
Father, your son came into this world  
To be known as the Prince of Peace  
In a world that knows hatred and conflict  
We bring those who are victims of war  
We bring those who are victims of bigotry  
We bring those who are bullied  
We bring those who are hurt by those they love  
Where we may speak for peace and justice

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

To serve the cause of justice  
Father, your son will judge humanity with this phrase  
“When you did this for these, the least of my siblings..”  
We bring before you the victims of injustice  
The poor in a wealthy land  
The homeless in a world of palaces  
The enslaved and the exploited  
The brutalised and the trafficked  
Where we may make the world a fairer place

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

So we pray for ourselves  
Your flock, gathered in this fold  
Lead us forth to serve you and those around us  
Strengthen us, guide us, lead us  
Always in your way  
This we ask in the name of our good shepherd  
Our Lord Jesus Christ

**Shepherd Lord, in your service**

*Guide us in your way*

## Sermon The Good Shepherd

### The Lord shepherds me (Psalm 23:1)

“The Lord shepherds me”. I’ve always enjoyed learning languages. Not in any great depth, to be fair, but have a smattering of a few, including Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek. I studied them a little when I was training as a Reader but I’m a bit rusty now. One of the bits of the Bible I used for studying was Psalm 23 and I found that the word we translate as shepherd isn’t a noun. It’s a verb. A doing word. And I kind of like that because it reflects God’s active love for us as his children. It reflects God’s active involvement with his flock - humanity. It reflects the God who actively stepped into the sheepfold, into this world, his creation in the life of a human being; in Jesus Christ.

I also like it - however clunky it might be in English - because most of what follows it is about what God does, rather than who he is. He makes me lie down. He is with me. He sets a table. He anoints my head. Above all, perhaps, he leads. This is the primary role of a shepherd - to lead the flock to green pastures. For God that means leading his flock, humanity, to lead good lives: to define what it means to lead a good life. Perhaps more than any religion at the time - certainly more than for the Roman and Greek religions that came later, the idea that God leads us to do what is right is a core idea in Judaism and it’s reflected in Psalm 1: “Blessed is the person who does not walk in the guidance of the ungodly”.

Walk in the guidance of God. Follow the shepherd who leads us. And leads us most truly in Jesus Christ, his son, in whom he came to us not just to teach us but to show us what it is to lead a good life; to be our shepherd. Here’s a thing, though. When we’re talking about shepherds in Jesus’s time we’ve got to rid ourselves of any images we may have of ruddy-faced shepherd boys and their lasses. Shepherds were pretty much universally despised in Jesus’s times. They were outcasts. Their word was so untrustworthy they weren’t allowed to be witnesses in court. You can almost imagine, when Jesus calls himself a shepherd in John’s gospel, the apostles thinking, “Wait! You’re a what?”

Maybe that’s why Jesus emphasised that he was the *good* shepherd. That he’s not like the hired hands who’d run away if the sheep were threatened by, say, a mountain lion. He would be with them - with us - always. He would lay down his life for them, for us, and take it up again. See the parable of the lost sheep: “if anyone having a hundred sheep should lose one, would he not leave the ninety-nine and go and find it?” No. The shepherds of his time wouldn’t. Nor, I suspect, would we.

But Jesus is the *good* shepherd. He teaches us, and showed us, that in the eyes of God each and every one of us is precious beyond measure; that you are worth the life of the son of God - each and every one of you - is worth the life of God’s son given up on the cross of Calvary; that the *good* shepherd leads his flock through the valley of the shadow of death into eternal life. No wonder some of the earliest depictions we have of Christ is of the good shepherd bringing the lost sheep home.

And that’s such an important image because we are called to follow Christ’s teachings and above all to follow his example in leading a good life. A life shaped by Jesus’s one commandment: love one another; love your neighbour as you love yourself; a commandment that bundles all the rules of the Old Testament into one easy to remember instruction. If we want to follow our shepherd, to follow Christ, that should be straightforward, right?

Yeah, but we don’t, do we? We go astray, don’t we? The world is full of shiny things that we want to keep to ourselves even if our neighbour goes hungry. We divide ourselves into tribes - political

tribes, racial tribes, national tribes, religious tribes - and convince ourselves that our neighbours cannot be found across those tribal divides. We tug our forelocks to the wealthy and powerful while despising those who need benefits to keep the wolf from the door because they're too sick to work. We go astray.

But for the good shepherd we are not lost. Through the cross of Jesus Christ we are forgiven and brought home and given a fresh chance each day to follow his teachings and to walk in his way: to live a good life. To live a life that brings light to the world and salt to the earth; to live a life that touches the lives of others and shows them they are precious; to be shepherded by God in Christ toward what we are meant to be - God's children, made in his image - and maybe, just maybe, beckon those around us to follow in our way.

Here's the thing. Imagine a flock following a shepherd along a narrow path. Which sheep can actually see the shepherd? The ones at the front, right? The ones at the back follow the ones at the front. What if the point of being a Christian is to be the sheep at the front - the ones who can see the good shepherd, Christ, and follow him? What if the point of being a Christian is to lead a life so filled with kindness, generosity, compassion - a life that accepts and embraces our neighbours however different from us they may be - that folk think, "You know what? I want to find out what inspires them"?

The Lord shepherds me. Yes, he does. And when we go astray he's always ready to bring us home. Can we do less for others?

*Shepherd lord inspire us to follow in the footsteps of your son always and let him be our shepherd.  
Help us to guide those around us to join his flock*

## **Offering Good Shepherd**

Father, we thank you for the image of the Good Shepherd  
We thank you for its message of love  
That you care for each and every one of us; that none is forgotten  
That you love us so much that you gave your own son for us.  
We thank you for the message of guidance  
That you are at our side every moment  
We thank you for the simple everyday blessings of life  
For the things which make us smile and laugh  
For kind words and the support of others in sorrow  
For food and shelter; beauty and truth  
In thankfulness we bring this offering to your table  
We seek your blessings upon it, and upon us  
That it, and we, may be rededicated to your work in the world  
To the building up of your church  
And to the bringing in of your kingdom.

**Amen.**

## Hymn CH4 462 The King Of Love My Shepherd Is

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 ring Thy praise  
Within Thy house for ever !

**Benediction** The Lord's Flock

You are the Lord's flock

Go, secure in the knowledge that he loves you

You are the Lord's flock

Go and love one another, for you are loved

You are the Lord's flock

Go and love; for love is of God

The God revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ

The shepherd King

And now may the breath of God the Father be ever at your backs

May the teachings of his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, be ever in your minds

May the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ever in your hearts



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**Annan Old 21st April 2024**

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**Readings** Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

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**Intercession** Shepherd Lord

**Shepherd Lord, in your service**

*Guide us in your way*

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Come let us gather as his flock

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Let us follow in his way

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Come, let us bring our praises and prayers

For the Lord is King

Let us gather in worship

## Hymn CH4 355 You Lord Are Both Lamb And Shepherd

You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.  
You, Lord, are both prince and slave.  
You, peacemaker and swordbringer  
Of the way you took and gave.  
You the everlasting instant;  
You, whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain,  
Stripped of might upon the cross,  
Shining in eternal glory,  
Beggar'd by a soldier's toss,  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are both gift and cost.

You, who walk each day beside us,  
Sit in power at God's side.  
You, who preach a way that's narrow,  
Have a love that reaches wide.  
You, the everlasting instant;  
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Worthy is our earthly Jesus!  
Worthy is our cosmic Christ!  
Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.  
Worthy still your peace and strife.  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are our death and life.  
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.  
You, who are our death and our life.

## **Approach Astray**

Father, Creator, Lord  
Maker of all that is  
Your servant David called you his shepherd  
The shepherd who loves his sheep  
For you are there for us in times of trouble  
You guide us on the paths of life  
All we have is at your hands  
And you offer us an eternal home with you  
So we rejoice in your love for us  
A love revealed in your son  
The good shepherd who guides us in your way  
But we go astray  
He taught us to love one another  
That we fulfil your commandments when we do that  
That we are at our best when we look after each other  
But we don't  
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Shepherd Lord, forgive us...

Your son came to us as the Prince of Peace  
And taught us to love our enemies  
To turn the other cheek and put down our swords  
That we are at our best when we live in peace  
But we don't  
We divide ourselves into tribes  
We watch the news and it is filled with war  
We have even taken up arms in your name  
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Each of us in our own ways  
In our times of weakness and temptation  
Each of us has times of selfishness  
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Times when we have been less than we could have been  
We go astray  
Shepherd Lord forgive us...

Forgive us and guide us always  
To follow in the way of your son  
In the way of our shepherd  
To live in the ways he taught us  
To be his flock and to tread his path  
To pray as he prayed, saying these words

## **Address Little Boy Blue**

Come little boy blue, come blow your horn  
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn  
Where is the boy who looks after the sheep ?  
He's under the haystack fast asleep

Does he not matter? The flock go astray  
Does he shrug his shoulders, "I'm here for the pay"  
Are we here for the hymns, the stillness and prayer  
Not the challenge to leave and go out to care?

Come Jesus and walk before us always  
Guiding our actions and words every day  
Inspire us to be a good shepherd to sheep  
Beguiled by comfort and fast asleep

## **Hymn CH4 1 How Blest Are They That Do Not Stray**

How blest are those that do not stray  
Led by the wicked's talk  
Who will not with the sinful stand  
Nor sit where scoffers mock

The teaching of the Lord their God  
They follow with delight  
And meditate upon his word  
With gladness day and night

They flourish like well-watered trees  
Set by a riverside  
Whose fruit matures, whose leaves remain  
They prosper and abide

The wicked, like the straw and chaff  
By wind blown far away  
Can have no place among the just  
Nor stand on judgement day

The Lord will guard the righteous well  
He knows the way they take  
But doomed to perish is the way  
The wicked undertake

## Readings Psalm 23

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## 1 John 3:16-24

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## John 10:11-18

"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."



## **Hymn CH4255 Father Hear The Prayer We Offer**

Father, hear the prayer we offer:  
not for ease that prayer shall be,  
but for strength that we may ever  
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures  
do we ask our way to be;  
but the steep and rugged pathway  
may we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters  
would we idly rest and stay;  
but would smite the living fountains  
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,  
in our wanderings be our guide;  
through endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be thou at our side.

## **Intercession Shepherd Lord**

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

*Guide us in your way*

We gather here, your flock  
As other sheep gather in other folds  
Ready to be led forth  
To go from here in your service  
To share your love with others

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

To serve those who are hurting  
Father, your son came into this world  
To bring healing and wholeness and love  
We bring before you those who are sick  
And who long for healing  
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And who long for wholeness  
We bring those who are lonely  
And long for love  
We bring those we know...

Where we may heal or bring wholeness or love

### **Shepherd Lord, in your service**

To serve the cause of peace  
Father, your son came into this world  
To be known as the Prince of Peace  
In a world that knows hatred and conflict  
We bring those who are victims of war  
We bring those who are victims of bigotry  
We bring those who are bullied  
We bring those who are hurt by those they love  
Where we may speak for peace and justice

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Father, your son will judge humanity with this phrase  
“When you did this for these, the least of my siblings..”  
We bring before you the victims of injustice  
The poor in a wealthy land  
The homeless in a world of palaces  
The enslaved and the exploited  
The brutalised and the trafficked  
Where we may make the world a fairer place

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So we pray for ourselves  
Your flock, gathered in this fold  
Lead us forth to serve you and those around us  
Strengthen us, guide us, lead us  
Always in your way  
This we ask in the name of our good shepherd  
Our Lord Jesus Christ

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*Guide us in your way*

## Hymn CH4 462 The King Of Love My Shepherd Is

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 ring Thy praise  
Within Thy house for ever !

## Sermon The Good Shepherd

### The Lord shepherds me (Psalm 23:1)

“The Lord shepherds me”. I’ve always enjoyed learning languages. Not in any great depth, to be fair, but have a smattering of a few, including Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek. I studied them a little when I was training as a Reader but I’m a bit rusty now. One of the bits of the Bible I used for studying was Psalm 23 and I found that the word we translate as shepherd isn’t a noun. It’s a verb. A doing word. And I kind of like that because it reflects God’s active love for us as his children. It reflects God’s active involvement with his flock - humanity. It reflects the God who actively stepped into the sheepfold, into this world, his creation in the life of a human being; in Jesus Christ.

I also like it - however clunky it might be in English - because most of what follows it is about what God does, rather than who he is. He makes me lie down. He is with me. He sets a table. He anoints my head. Above all, perhaps, he leads. This is the primary role of a shepherd - to lead the flock to green pastures. For God that means leading his flock, humanity, to lead good lives: to define what it means to lead a good life. Perhaps more than any religion at the time - certainly more than for the Roman and Greek religions that came later, the idea that God leads us to do what is right is a core idea in Judaism and it’s reflected in Psalm 1: “Blessed is the person who does not walk in the guidance of the ungodly”.

Walk in the guidance of God. Follow the shepherd who leads us. And leads us most truly in Jesus Christ, his son, in whom he came to us not just to teach us but to show us what it is to lead a good life; to be our shepherd. Here’s a thing, though. When we’re talking about shepherds in Jesus’s time we’ve got to rid ourselves of any images we may have of ruddy-faced shepherd boys and their lasses. Shepherds were pretty much universally despised in Jesus’s times. They were outcasts. Their word was so untrustworthy they weren’t allowed to be witnesses in court. You can almost imagine, when Jesus calls himself a shepherd in John’s gospel, the apostles thinking, “Wait! You’re a what?”

Maybe that’s why Jesus emphasised that he was the *good* shepherd. That he’s not like the hired hands who’d run away if the sheep were threatened by, say, a mountain lion. He would be with them - with us - always. He would lay down his life for them, for us, and take it up again. See the parable of the lost sheep: “if anyone having a hundred sheep should lose one, would he not leave the ninety-nine and go and find it?” No. The shepherds of his time wouldn’t. Nor, I suspect, would we.

But Jesus is the *good* shepherd. He teaches us, and showed us, that in the eyes of God each and every one of us is precious beyond measure; that you are worth the life of the son of God - each and every one of you - is worth the life of God’s son given up on the cross of Calvary; that the *good* shepherd leads his flock through the valley of the shadow of death into eternal life. No wonder some of the earliest depictions we have of Christ is of the good shepherd bringing the lost sheep home.

And that’s such an important image because we are called to follow Christ’s teachings and above all to follow his example in leading a good life. A life shaped by Jesus’s one commandment: love one another; love your neighbour as you love yourself; a commandment that bundles all the rules of the Old Testament into one easy to remember instruction. If we want to follow our shepherd, to follow Christ, that should be straightforward, right?

Yeah, but we don’t, do we? We go astray, don’t we? The world is full of shiny things that we want to keep to ourselves even if our neighbour goes hungry. We divide ourselves into tribes - political

tribes, racial tribes, national tribes, religious tribes - and convince ourselves that our neighbours cannot be found across those tribal divides. We tug our forelocks to the wealthy and powerful while despising those who need benefits to keep the wolf from the door because they're too sick to work. We go astray.

But for the good shepherd we are not lost. Through the cross of Jesus Christ we are forgiven and brought home and given a fresh chance each day to follow his teachings and to walk in his way: to live a good life. To live a life that brings light to the world and salt to the earth; to live a life that touches the lives of others and shows them they are precious; to be shepherded by God in Christ toward what we are meant to be - God's children, made in his image - and maybe, just maybe, beckon those around us to follow in our way.

Here's the thing. Imagine a flock following a shepherd along a narrow path. Which sheep can actually see the shepherd? The ones at the front, right? The ones at the back follow the ones at the front. What if the point of being a Christian is to be the sheep at the front - the ones who can see the good shepherd, Christ, and follow him? What if the point of being a Christian is to lead a life so filled with kindness, generosity, compassion - a life that accepts and embraces our neighbours however different from us they may be - that folk think, "You know what? I want to find out what inspires them"?

The Lord shepherds me. Yes, he does. And when we go astray he's always ready to bring us home. Can we do less for others?

*Shepherd lord inspire us to follow in the footsteps of your son always and let him be our shepherd.  
Help us to guide those around us to join his flock*

## **Offering Good Shepherd**

Father, we thank you for the image of the Good Shepherd  
We thank you for its message of love  
That you care for each and every one of us; that none is forgotten  
That you love us so much that you gave your own son for us.  
We thank you for the message of guidance  
That you are at our side every moment  
We thank you for the simple everyday blessings of life  
For the things which make us smile and laugh  
For kind words and the support of others in sorrow  
For food and shelter; beauty and truth  
In thankfulness we bring this offering to your table  
We seek your blessings upon it, and upon us  
That it, and we, may be rededicated to your work in the world  
To the building up of your church  
And to the bringing in of your kingdom.

**Amen.**

**Sunday Gang** Let There Be Love Shared Among Us

Let there be love shared among us  
Let there be love in our eyes  
May now your love sweep this nation  
Cause us O Lord to arise  
Give us a fresh understanding  
Of brotherly love that is real  
Let there be love shared among us  
Let there be love



**Benediction** The Lord's Flock

You are the Lord's flock

Go, secure in the knowledge that he loves you

You are the Lord's flock

Go and love one another, for you are loved

You are the Lord's flock

Go and love; for love is of God

The God revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ

The shepherd King

And now may the breath of God the Father be ever at your backs

May the teachings of his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, be ever in your minds

May the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ever in your hearts