

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #56

28th April 2021

Dear Church Family,

Last Sunday we celebrated 'Good Shepherd Sunday' as we read the familiar passage from John's gospel where Jesus describes himself as the 'Good (or even wonderful!) Shepherd'.

This week, I came across the phrase 'Bummer lambs.' Every once in a while, a ewe will give birth to a lamb and reject it. There are many reasons she may do this. If the lamb is returned to the ewe, the mother may even kick the poor animal away. Once a ewe rejects one of her lambs, she will never change her mind. These little lambs will hang their heads so low that it



looks like something is wrong with its neck. Their spirit is broken. These lambs are called 'Bummer lambs.'

Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die, rejected and alone. So, do you know what the shepherd does? He takes that rejected little one into his home, hand-feeds it and keep it warm by the fire. He will wrap it up with blankets and hold it to his chest so the bummer can hear his heartbeat. Once

the lamb is strong enough, the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock. But that sheep never forgets how the shepherd cared for him when his mother rejected him. When the shepherd calls for the flock, guess who runs to him first? That's right, the bummer sheep. He knows his voice intimately.

It is not that the bummer lamb is loved more, it just knows intimately the one who loves it. It's not that it is loved more, it just believes it because it has experienced that love one on one. So many of us are bummer lambs, rejected and broken. But Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He cares for our every need and holds us close to his heart so we can hear his heartbeat. Remember - we may be broken but we are deeply loved by the Shepherd.

It's been lovely to welcome people back to church over these last few weeks. As the country begins to re-open after lockdown, the restrictions ease and more of us receive our vaccinations, it would be lovely to look out again on a full church on a Sunday morning. If you've not tried church yet, it would be great to see you.

On Sunday 30th May we will be trialling a new way of being church for all ages – outdoors. Worshipping God in nature offers countless opportunities as God has much to say to us through his creation. If you've been nervous about returning to church indoors, why not join us outdoors? For our first session we'll be thinking about God as a gardener and will get an overview of God's particular interest in trees. We'll meet at 3pm just inside the church gates

and the session will be led by Hazel Davis, our ordinand from Ridley. There'll be stories, song, a quiz and prayer as well as much exploring of the churchyard trees. If popular, this session will be the first of many, so do come along if you're interested. Dress according to the weather, and bring a brolly or raincoat if damp.



As the lockdown restrictions ease with garden visits (and soon indoor visits) permitted, please do let me know if you'd like me to pop in for a cuppa. There's limited time to catch up with folk on the church path after services, but I'm always happy to meet for a tea/coffee or to go for a walk. Just let me know.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be after the 10.30am service on Sunday 30th May. We *do* need to appoint a second Churchwarden as Graham Appleby must step down this year. If this is a role you are thinking about, do please speak to either myself or one of the existing wardens ASAP. The role is well supported by myself and several Assistant Churchwardens.

If you've joined the church over the last year and/or are not yet on the Electoral Roll, forms will be available at both churches over the next few weeks. If you've also not completed a GDPR form (giving us permission to hold your details and contact you), please pick up a form from the table.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes,

Revd Lynda Davies

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