

Parishes of Stainton, Hilton and Brookfield

3rd May 2020 - 4th Sunday of Easter

**Welcome.** We're happy that you have joined us. Our buildings are closed, our congregations are scattered, but the Church of God is still active.

*"Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture."*

Collect *The special prayer set for today*

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. Amen

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.  
Acts 2.42-47

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.

PSALM 23

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.**

He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters

He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.**

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

1 Peter 2.19-25

Brothers and sisters: It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly.

If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.'

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

A reading from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. vs10.1-10

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.'

*This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ*

### Thought for today

*In much popular imagination . . . shepherding is a fairly worry-free life; idyllic scenes of rolling green pastures; lazy, grazing sheep; and long, carefree afternoons on the hillside. Of course the reality is somewhat different and the work of a shepherd is not easy. Shepherds are tough-bodied and equally tough-minded people working to a clear plan, coordinating the overall movement of a group of easily distracted herd animals, and ready to intervene at a moment's notice to bring individuals going astray or into danger back into safety. Far from worry-free, the life and work of a shepherd is one of nearly constant vigilance."* –

*United Methodist Discipleship Ministries*

This is the kind of shepherd Jesus was during his life on earth. A "Good Shepherd," guiding us, protecting us, gently leading us, and ultimately, laying down his life for us.



LET US PRAY TOGETHER ...

**...for Christians of all denominations, and congregations while we are unable to meet in person at this time.**

**For clergy, pastors, ministers in our own country and in the world church asking for clear guidance and direction for them and for us in our present difficulties.**

**We pray that a priest will be found to shepherd our parishes and to lead us in faith**

**Whilst we cannot meet our friends, neighbours and family members, let us bring them with us into the Lord's presence.**

**Particularly let us offer prayers for any we know who are finding it difficult to cope day to day under the present restrictions.**

**We pray for all people working in essential services who daily risk their health and lives for our safety and support, giving thanks for the many acts of self giving and self sacrifice that we see all around us.**

**Remembering those who have died, we give thanks for their lives and pray for the repose of their souls: we pray also for those who ache with sorrow at their passing, bereaved families and distressed colleagues. We commend them all into God's unfailing care and comfort which lasts throughout this life and on into eternity.**

**We must always give thanks to our Lord Jesus, Good Shepherd and Saviour, that by his giving of himself we are able to live through good times and ill with abundance of life.**

**Lord in your mercy .. Hear our prayer**

*A prayer for ourselves*

**Good Shepherd**

Teach us to follow you  
to care for all who are close to us,  
to protect those who are threatened,  
to welcome those who are rejected,  
to forgive those who are burdened by guilt,  
to heal those who are broken and sick,  
to share with those who have little or nothing,  
to take the time to really know one another  
and love as you have loved us.

**When at night you cannot sleep**

**Talk to the Shepherd**

**And stop counting sheep !**

The Church office is closed during the present crisis  
For all enquiries please email [BSHplurality@hotmail.com](mailto:BSHplurality@hotmail.com)  
or telephone 01642 597454 and leave a message. .

### Church Wardens at Stainton

**Vernon Clare 01642 592186**

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### Church Wardens at Hilton

**Barbara Sowerby 01642 591532**

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If you need a priest urgently please phone the  
Area Dean, Revd Canon John Ford 01642 964664