

St Francis Weekly News for The Fourth Sunday of Easter 3rd May 2020



This bulletin may have come to you by email or through your letterbox, if you received it on paper but are happy to receive an email in future please email deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com If you know anybody else who would like this delivered or emailed please contact Deborah or Revd Janet: revdjanetwyer@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

As can be seen from previous editions of the weekly newsletter an awful lot has been happening in St Francis Church during this very strange time that we find ourselves living through.

St Francis Heartsease Free Food and the associated 'Let it Grow' project; the Easter Window display; Revd Winnie and Eeyore; the flowering prayer stations in the field at the rear of the church; online adventures such as the Sunday morning zoom worship, the Thursday evening prayer meeting, and the Wednesday evening study course; and this weekly newsletter are all examples of how we are finding new and exciting ways to be God's Church as we struggle to come to terms with all that is happening in our lives, in our community and in the wider world.



Cheerful daffodils still smiling at the world from one of the prayer stations

Together we are acknowledging the huge importance of keeping in touch with one another, we are delighting in the simple joys of sharing good news and rejoicing in how good it feels to encourage one another and lend a helping hand and a listening ear wherever and whenever possible.

All these things are what Church should be anyway – but it feels great that St Francis has pulled together, each of us in our own way to make all these amazing things happen at such a difficult time.

And if these are not enough there are still more wonderful things to give thanks for – initiatives that have grown up over the past few weeks and are steadily gaining in popularity and take up.

Sarah Lechmere has long been involved in delivering an amazing ministry to St Francis based upon her online and social media skills, and I am really delighted to say that the St Francis Facebook page goes from strength to strength thanks to her efforts.

As a co-author of our Facebook page I receive regular updates as to the most popular posts – and the one topic that outstrips every other post we put out there is one that Sarah launched a couple of weeks ago.

When out walking around the Estate as part of her daily exercise routine Sarah started taking snaps of all the rainbows that children [and grown ups] have placed in their windows to spread a little happiness and give a message of hope to passers by.

Putting some of these together she posted them onto Facebook – and lo and behold people loved them!



St Francis Facebook page is now the place to check out if you want to see the latest in rainbows; and a lovely way to encourage and inspire our budding artists!



One great sadness of this lockdown has been the fact that we are no longer able to keep in touch with all the children and young people that formally came through the doors as part of the ENYP groups that ran on a regular basis in St Francis. It seemed that ministry to the younger members of our community was almost impossible – however here is something that now brings us back in touch; and in a way that is, I think, incredibly cool!

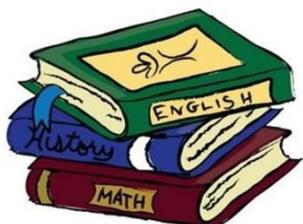


Sarah is also the inspiration [and the brains] behind the St Francis Home School Help Online Service and with her mother Deborah heading up a photocopying service for parents without a printer it is good news all round in terms of reaching out to children and their families.

St Francis Home School help



Printing service, free or cost price printing
 Email tutoring or question service
 (Most subjects to GCSE, English, History and Maths to A level)
 Contact deborah@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk



Many, many thanks to Sarah and Deborah for all they are doing.

VE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Although like everyone else we will be restricted in how we can join in the celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe, St Francis Church will still be playing a part in the celebrations.

The bell will be rung to mark the beginning and the end of the 11.00am national two minute silence and at 3.00pm Me and my husband David will stand outside St Francis with a glass of bubbly to raise the toast, "To those who gave so much, we thank you", on behalf of the church.

We will endeavour to decorate the church with bunting [if we can find it...] and if anyone is able to help with that – it would be most appreciated.

It also occurred to me that some of you may like to produce a special VE day rainbow, picture or message to be displayed in the window – if so please either scan a copy and send by email: vicar@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk or give me a call: 07990 576118 and we can arrange a time for it to be dropped off at the church.

I also understand that Revd Winnie has special plans, but I guess we'll have to wait and see...



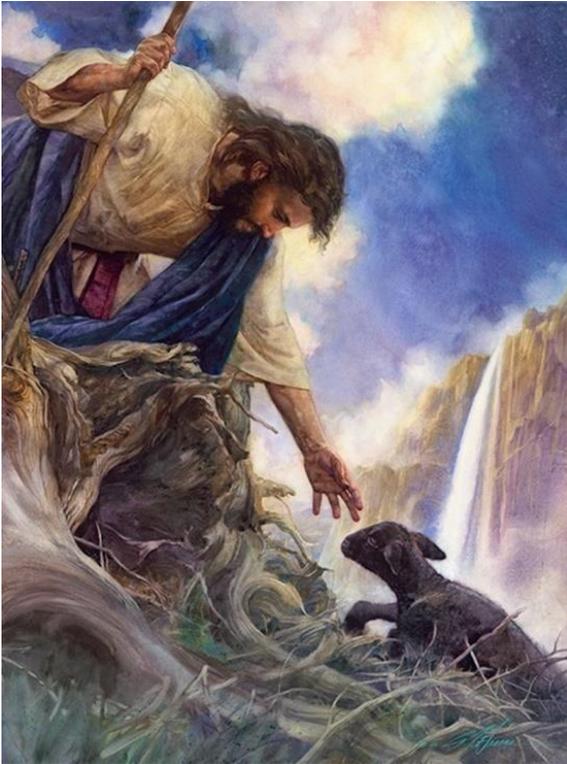
Revd Winnie and Eeyore burning the midnight oil to learn all about rainbows

THE HIVE

Some of you may have been wondering what is happening with the Hive – well, the answer to that is a story of rest and renewal! For the time being the building has been closed with all access strictly restricted. This is to comply with the Church of England guidelines regarding non essential church premises.

But although the doors are closed I'm very happy to say that there has been much activity inside! The Hive has had a thorough spring clean [thank you Gerald] which means that when the time is right the Hive will be ready to spring into action and once

And indeed, just in case you needed reminding, the word pastoral relates to shepherds, flocks and herds – especially relevant this week as we look at the Gospel story of Jesus explaining to his disciples that he is the Shepherd who has come to show them the way to life and who will keep them safe for ever.



In times of stress and anxiety it's always good to know that help and support is always available.

This is just a gentle reminder that we are always ready to listen if you need to talk. [07990 576118]

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In these difficult times someone might just need one of them...

Childline: 0800 1111

Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

St Francis Free Food: 07990 576118

[Other numbers are listed at the back of the newsletter]

WORSHIP & PRAYER

ZOOM BCP COMMUNION

Each Sunday at 10.30am I will be celebrating Holy Communion using the Book of Common Prayer service. This will be available to watch on Zoom.

If you would like to join the Zoom Room, please contact Sarah Housden who will be happy to enable that to happen. sarahj.housden@gmail.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like prayer or there is someone on your heart that you would like included on the prayer list.

Although we cannot meet one to one for prayer ministry – we certainly can pray together over the phone, or through one of the other means of communication you might have access to.

At the present time there also is a perpetual candle alight on the altar and names can be placed there as an extra source of comfort if so desired. Again, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me to talk through what might be best for you.



A WORD FROM THE VICAR

Throughout this newsletter I am very aware that there are several invitations for people to get in contact with me. These invitations are not there just for show – I really do mean that you can contact me!

I cannot tell you how often I hear the words “I didn’t ring you Vicar, because I know how busy you are!”

My response to that is always, ‘Yes, I am busy – but never too busy to talk to you...’

If you feel you would like to speak with me, please do give me a call. I may not answer the phone directly, but if you leave a message, I will always get back to you as soon as I can.

God’s peace and blessing be with you and yours

Revd Janet

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Lorna, Margaret & Martin, David B, Paula, Gill, Karen, Maegan, John R & Bee, Colin, Lynn, Pete, Lauren, Fr Brian, David and Hazel L.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Alma, Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Molly, Shirley.

We remember with love all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends

A PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Church of St Francis
Heartsease**

Heavenly Father

**We ask your blessing upon us.
Hold the Heartsease Community,
and all the world,
in your arms of love.
Be with us.
Give us your strength,
peace, and healing grace.
Watch over us,
protect us from harm;
and keep in safety
all those who care for the sick
and attend to our needs,
in Jesus name we pray.
Amen**

PRAYERS FOR THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

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. Amen

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

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

GENESIS 7

Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.' And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth. And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth.



In the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.

On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons, entered the ark, they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind— every bird, every winged creature.

They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.

The flood continued for forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings; everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.



He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred and fifty days.

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters
- 3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
- 4 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.

- 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
- 6 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.



ACTS 2: 42-end

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.



1 PETER 2: 19 - end

It is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in 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.

JOHN 10: 1-10

'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.

'I AM THE GATE FOR THE SHEEP' - Revd Janet

The readings from Scripture for this fourth Sunday of Easter span the entire Holy Bible almost from the very beginning to almost the very end.

An account of the flood in the story of Noah's Ark, a beautiful psalm, a fragment of Jesus' teaching from John's Gospel, a description of the early church taken from the book of the Acts of the Apostles and a part of a letter written by Peter in approx. AD 65 to Christians in Asia Minor.

At first glance, and maybe even after a first reading, the link between them all may not be easy to see. After all what does all this talk of flood, shepherds, flocks, gates, and church have in common?

Well, maybe the idea of being led to a 'safe place' might make drawing these readings together a little easier. As Jesus speaks to his listeners, he himself uses the idea of a safe place, a sheep fold, as a way to try to explain who he is, and what it is he brings to the world.

Jesus is well aware that those who oppose him deny that he is of God speaking God's truth to power, and that they will argue against him at every opportunity – he does after all threaten their way of life and security.

He knows that they are not concerned about the safety and well being of the people; it is the Temple Law and their way of life that is of paramount importance to them.

In his round about way, Jesus challenges his opponents in everything he says – and the multi-layered challenge he lays before them here is no different. Firstly, he tries one way of telling them that they are wrong minded – that they are thieves and bandits stealing the lives of the people – and then, when that doesn't work, he spells it out another way.

'I am the gate for the sheep' he says.

Or to put it another way, he says to them: 'I will always lead my flock into a place of safety, and when I have gathered them I will lay down in the doorway of the gateless fold to protect them from those who would cause them harm. And when the time has come to leave the safety of the sheepfold, I will let them out, leading them into the open again - they will be free, but always under my protection and care. When they follow *my* voice, they will never come to any harm!'

'It's only through me that God's flock will be come to know and enjoy safety, protection, care and life in abundance', he says, 'others, who care nothing

for them will only lead them to harm; and make no mistake folks, those 'others' are *you...*'

Oh dear, no wonder the Pharisees hated him. And no wonder the ordinary people loved him and followed him to hear what he would say next. Jesus had no problem in stirring up controversy; but how else can wrongs be put right - other than by speaking out?

Speaking out against wrong and injustice will always bring trouble one way or another, but those who speak out in Jesus' name, those who speak out from the safety of the sheepfold of the church of God, in the name of the ultimate shepherd, they do so from a place of safety and protection.

God promises a place of safe shelter to those who follow his way of truth, justice, and mercy.

Noah was brought through the Flood [think of the ark as a floating sheepfold]; the psalmist sings of the protection of God being like that of a shepherd for his sheep; the early church was a place of safety for those who wanted to follow Jesus and change the world into the kingdom of heaven; and Peter reminds his hearers that when they turn to Jesus who is the shepherd and guardian of their souls, their suffering for his sake is noble and good – they are safe under his protection no matter what might befall their fleshly body.

As a twenty first century people we perhaps don't like to think too much about suffering for Jesus sake; but the reality is that we will often find ourselves in times of hardship and distress. It is in these times that we need to listen to the shepherd's voice and having heard, pay attention and follow his way.

To follow any other voice – be it a political voice, the voice of the media, the voice of any popular celebrity, or even that little voice within ourselves that invites us to indulge our own desires – is to risk being led the wrong way.

Jesus will always guide us into truth, bring us to places of refreshment and transformation, and ultimately lead us to a safe place. With Jesus the world is safe; and so are we. Amen



Some years ago there was a story carried in various newspapers about a woman who was startled out of a dead sleep one night by some desperate cries of "Help! Help!" You know how it is when you awake to some sound: you are not at all certain whether you really heard something or if it was just a dream. At first she thought perhaps her husband had cried out, but he was sleeping soundly next to her. Then suddenly she heard the cries again: "Help! Help!" Finally, she threw back the covers and headed downstairs toward their living room. "Help!" went the plaintive voice yet again. "Where are you?" the woman replied. "In the fireplace," came the rather shocking answer.

And sure enough, dangling in the fireplace with his head sticking through the flue was a burglar, upside down and quite snugly stuck! The police and fire brigade got him out eventually, though not before having to disassemble the mantelpiece and some of the masonry. Perhaps the best part of the story was what this woman did in the meantime. She flipped on all the lights and videoed the whole thing. I don't know what the two talked about while waiting for the emergency services to arrive, but wouldn't it have been great if she had hauled out a Bible and given the burglar a pointed reading of John 10: 1, "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!"

This week you will also receive a Covid19 activity booklet, which is also ideal to share with younger family members. Perhaps if you are a self isolated grandparent you could get it passed to grandchildren you are unable to spend time with and they could complete and share with you when you are able to meet again. If you would like further copies please let either Deborah (Deborah@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk) or Revd Janet (07990 576118) know and we will get them to you with the next newsletter.

Name



John 10.1-10

Jesus tells us he is like a shepherd: he loves and protects his people, so we can live a full and happy life.



Family time

Talk In what ways do we see God at work in our lives?

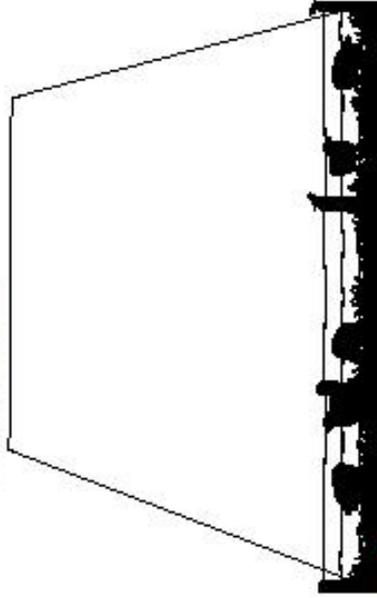
Do Give away something this week to someone else who may need it more than you as a sign of our abundant life.

Pray Father God, thank you for all the amazing things you give to us. We thank you for our family, our friends, our homes, and for the food that we eat. If we have enough, help us know that we have enough to share and to help others who do not have what we have. **Amen.**

Activity time



Sheep need good pasture to live a full and happy life. Can you draw some of the things that make your life full and happy in the field?



Sometimes sheep can wander off. Can you help this one find its way back to its field, to safety and abundance?

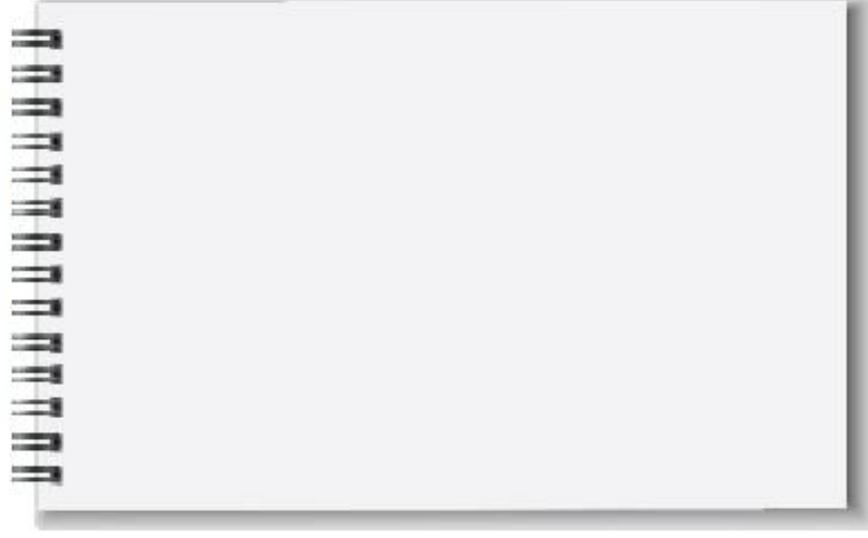


ROOTS children's Sheet

3-9 May 2020



Write a short letter as a prayer to God, saying thank you for the many good things that you have, and asking for his help to share them with others.



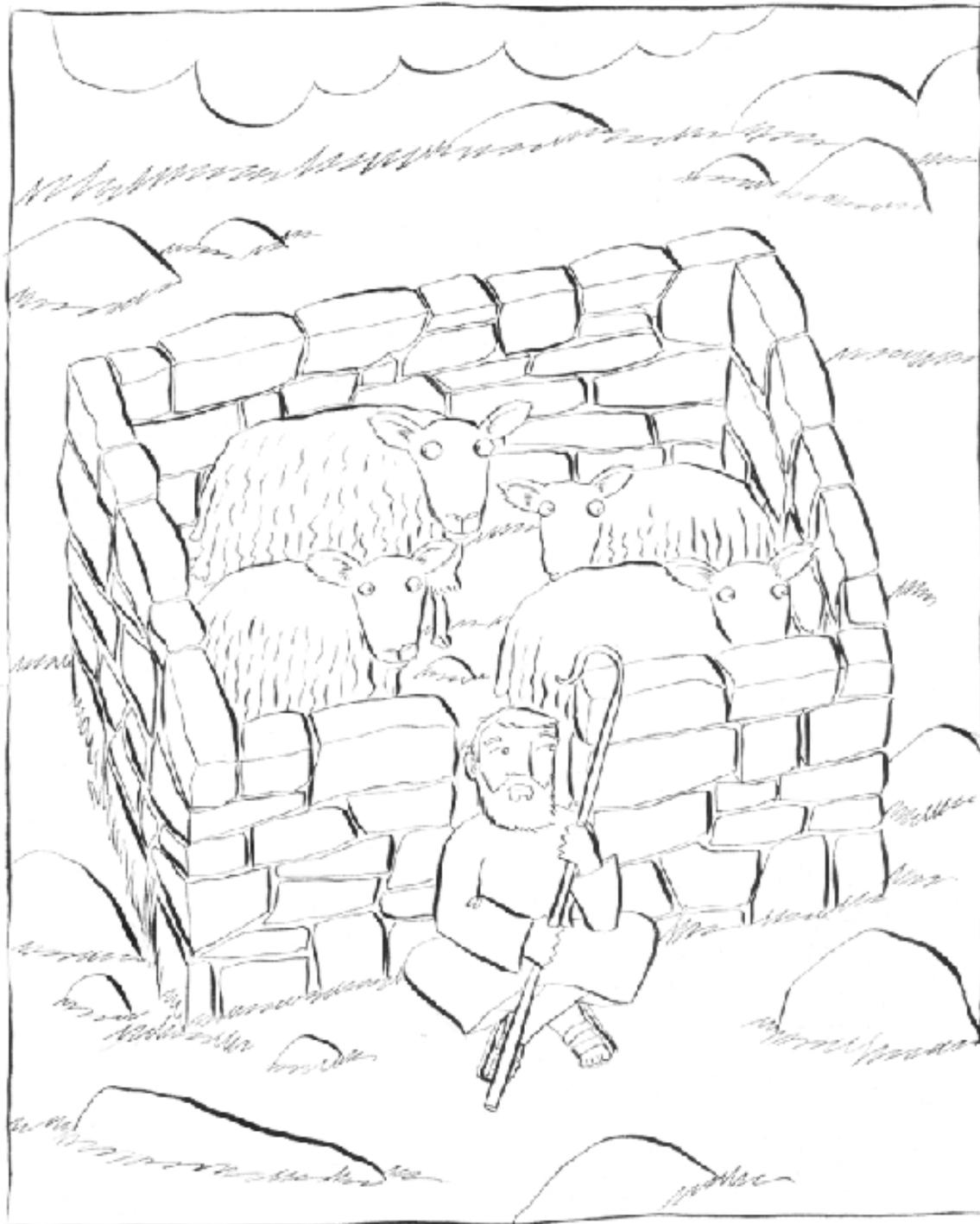
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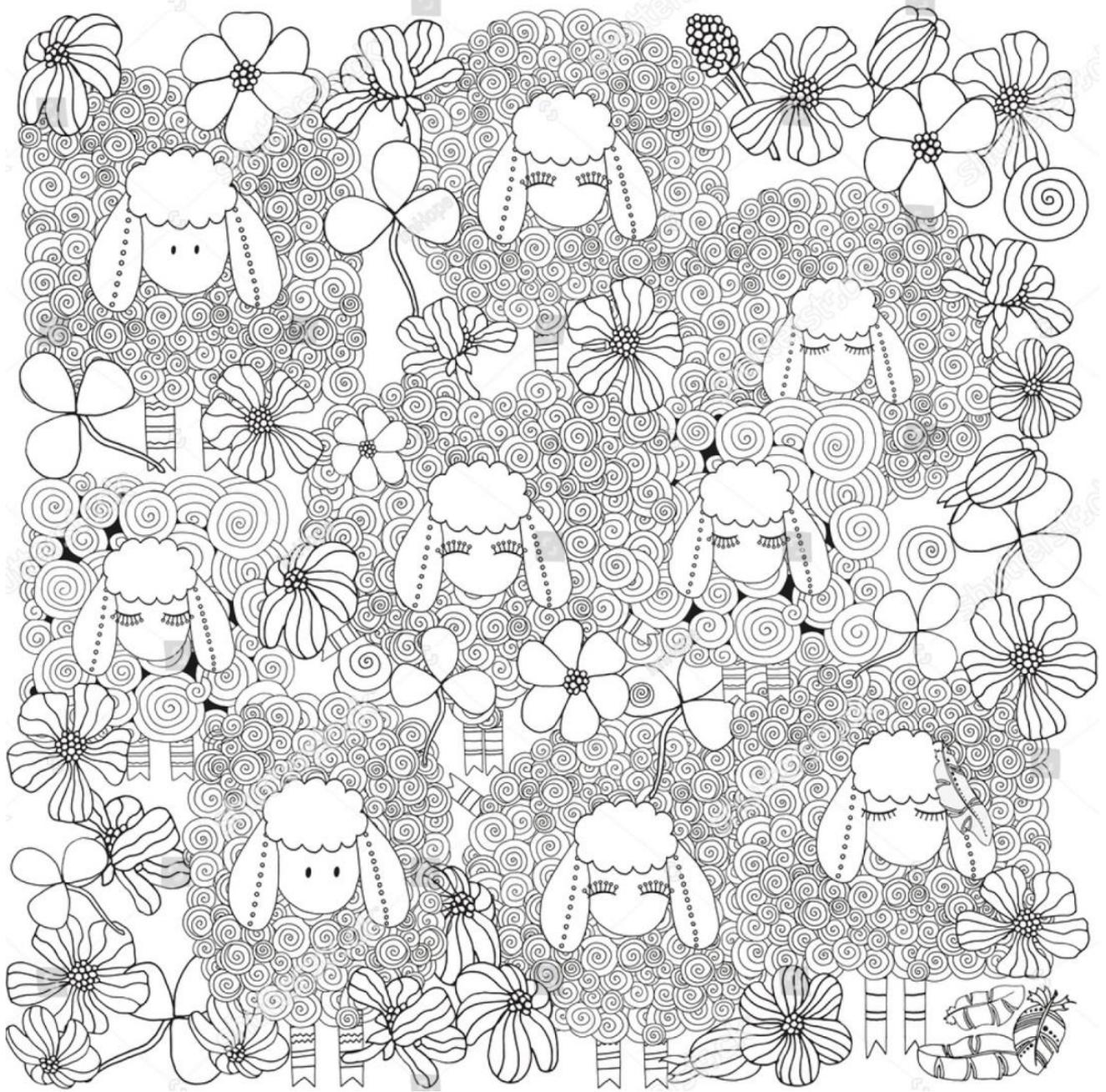
ROOTS Colouring Sheet

3-9 May 2020

Colouring time

A good shepherd in Jesus' time would have done everything to protect his sheep.





**The Good Shepherd
knows his sheep**



Jesus said, 'I am just like a good shepherd who takes care of his flock of sheep. He knows the names of all his sheep. When he calls them, they follow him into the safety of the sheepfold. And when he calls them out, they follow him wherever he goes, because they know and trust him. But if a stranger gets into the sheepfold and calls to the sheep, they refuse to follow, because they do not know the stranger's voice. The gatekeeper only opens the gate for the good shepherd. Thieves and robbers try to break into the fold to steal the sheep, but the shepherd protects them from danger.'

The people listening to Jesus still did not understand what he was saying, so he said to them, 'I am just like the gate of the sheepfold. All those who went before me were thieves and robbers who wanted to lead the sheep astray, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am not like a thief who comes to steal and kill and destroy. I am the gate: whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. I came that the sheep might have a full and happy life.'

Glossary

sheepfold an enclosure in a field to keep sheep safe from wild animals and thieves; first century Middle Eastern sheepfolds were made of stone.

USEFUL CONTACTS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

999 – Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Rescue)

101 – Police, non-emergency

111- NHS Telephone Health Advice Line

Norfolk County Council Services – for those who are vulnerable or in need of support Tel: 0344 800 8020

**First Response Mental Health Helpline open 24/7
Tel: 0808 196 3494**

Norwich Cruse Bereavement Support Tel: 01603 219977

Norwich Foodbank Emergency Help Tel: 0300 365 1123

Norwich City Councillors for Crome Ward:

Alan Waters Tel: 07774 229776

Adam Giles Tel: 07375 451983

Marion Maxwell Tel: 01603 615129

Thorpe Helping Hands, Community Support Service Tel: 07854 390408

Age UK Norwich Telephone Befriending 01603 496325

Age UK Norfolk Telephone Befriending 01603 785223

The Silver Line 0800 470 8090

Norfolk Association for the Disabled 01603 432900

Carers Matter 0800 0831148

**Community Law Service Advice Tel: 01603 496623
or 07900 153753**

Mancroft Advice Project [ages 11-25yrs] Tel: 0800 0744454

Citizens Advice Bureau Norwich Tel: 03444 111 444

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

NORCAS for those with drug, alcohol and gambling problems Tel: 01603 660070