

May 2024

One thing I enjoy seeing at this time of the year is when the lambs tear around the field together like a class of primary school children released into the playground. As I write the lambing season is all but over, the ewes and lambs are back out in the fields and the farmers can enjoy a bit more rest – or as much as they ever can when one has sheep to look after. Looking after sheep is hard work; they're wilful creatures, easily led and determined to escape from the safety of pen or field!

Sheep and shepherds were a familiar sight in Jesus' time and people knew how sheep behaved, so when Jesus talked about people being like sheep everyone would have known what he meant! People knew how committed shepherds were in caring for their sheep, leading them daily to new pasture and protecting them from wild animals. So when Jesus described himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18) his hearers would understand what he meant.

Jesus the Good Shepherd wants nothing more than to provide us, his flock, with all we need. Like a good shepherd he will lead us to places of peace and rest; if we trust him he will lead us along right paths to often unexpected places; he travels alongside us, even carrying us when life is especially hard; he knows us all by name, inside and out.

Most importantly Jesus is the Good Shepherd because he gave his life for us. He loves us so much that he willingly died so we might be forgiven and he rose again so we can all have eternal life and one day enjoy that great party in heaven promised in another well-known biblical passage with 'sheep' reference – the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm – or 'The Lord's my Shepherd' as you might know it. This makes Jesus not just the Good Shepherd, but the greatest shepherd there can ever be!

God bless

Revd Sue

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