

6th September, 2026

The paper-version Service



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks
Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that
flood,

Lose all their guilty stains:

Lose all their guilty stains;

And sinners, plunged beneath that
flood,

Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day;

And there may I, though vile as he,

Wash all my sins away:

Wash all my sins away;

And there may I, though vile as he,

Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood

Shall never lose its power,

Till all the ransomed ones of God

Be saved, to sin no more:

Be saved, to sin no more;

Till all the ransomed ones of God,

Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream

Thy flowing wounds supply,

Redeeming love has been my theme,

And shall be till I die:

And shall be till I die;

Redeeming love has been my theme,

And shall be till I die.

When this poor lisping, stammering
tongue

Lies silent in the grave,

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,

I'll sing Thy power to save:

I'll sing Thy power to save;

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,

I'll sing Thy power to save.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read 1 John 1:4-7 & Matthew 6:25-34 – Resourcing Church

I've been reading Joshua in my Old Testament daily readings. A key theme is, take the land which is yours to take. We, by the gift of the parish system, have been given a land. Our parish is our responsibility. We have been given the cure of souls for all these people. This is a life and death responsibility. We are to help people to the source of human flourishing, to find Jesus in whom is forgiveness, salvation, and everlasting life in all its fulness is found.

We, all people, are charged to fill the earth and subdue it – not stay in Eden, but transform the whole earth into Eden. We are not to worry about our preferences but about how we can reach those who have not yet found Jesus.

We pray often 'Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

And, Jesus commands us to 'be [his] witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:8) We can interpret this as be Jesus' witnesses in our homes, to our friends, neighbours and the whole world. Read Matthew 28:19-20.

This is God's vision for us, and should be our vision for our own lives and must be the vision for the life of our church, our parish. We stand in the promise of Abraham, that we are blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-3). Jesus calls us and all people to life in all its fulness (John 10:10), the alternative is death, our own, and our church's.

We are inheritors of those who gave generously in the past.

In what's known as the dark ages the first chapel was established at what we now know as Medstead, and down the years this has gone from a wooden church, to stone building and with numerous additions and alterations, but all with the purpose of being a place of worship equipped to bring the people of the area to Jesus. There would have been significant vision and considerable sacrifice and hard work to build this building – imagine trying to start such a project today.

In 1908 a prefab hut was brought up from Ropley to serve as a church. In the 1950s COGS was built its current site – a site including a house which was given in faith of a church being built for the glory of God. In the 1970s and 90s, this original building was extended to the facilities we have today. All possible because of the faith of our forebears and the vision of extending God's Kingdom, enabling all to know Jesus.

Today, I hope, we look back with gratitude to those who went before us. So what will people say about us in 25-50, or more years' time?

God is writing a bigger and better story than that of empires, industry, businesses, retailers, marketeers. He is building an everlasting Kingdom which

continues like the mustard seed, or yeast in dough, or Daniel's rock cut without human hands to grow and fill the whole earth. And we are invited to participate in God's Kingdom, to join in and build a legacy which will lay the foundations for the next generations.

Being invited into the Kingdom of God is a privilege, and we are invited in as children of God, princesses and princes of the King. This comes with privilege and responsibility – think about our, and our societies response to Prince Andrew. Contributing is a privilege and source of blessing to us, as we bless others – notice Abraham again. We have been hand-picked to be in the family and on the team – all are chosen!

So, what can we do?

We can pray.

Pray for God's Kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as in Heaven. We can bring our requests by 'prayer and petition, with thanksgiving' (Philippians 4 v.6). Be specific with God, and ask him to help you with these specifics (Romans 8 v.26). We can use the News email to lead our prayers, praying for each other and our activities.

We can give time. Can you join in? It may be just making tea and coffee or baking a cake or help setting up or tidying away. It might be joining our pastoral ministry or PCC, or any of the myriad rotas that exist. You might have a skill that you can offer – needlework, or electronics, or woodwork, or gardening. If you want to know more, talk to Virginia, Jane, Matt, or me.

As we review our diaries, reflect on the parable of the talents – both the extraordinary rewards of investment in the right places, and the awful consequence for failing to invest wisely.

We can give money. Giving is an act of worship, and we need to review regularly. We should take note of the Old Testament tithe/tenth (Malachi 3:10), this is a starting place for many of us – with gifts and offerings over and above. But also notice, the widow's mite story which warns us that giving is judged not by how much we give, but by how much hold back for ourselves.

Some of us might need to give less as our circumstances can change. Some of us can give more, investing in Mission and Ministry – in God's Kingdom's work. That is sharing Jesus and his loving salvation and 'making disciples' (Matthew 28:18-20)

So, what investment will we make in the Kingdom of God? God's investment in us is all-in, what are we going to invest for him. Will we invest in life – God's fullness of life, God's everlasting life – or in things that will die, ending with our death. Jim Elliott, missionary and martyr said, *'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose'*.

14th Sunday after Trinity: Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: September 16th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: September 23rd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- Harvest Tea & Praise: Sunday, 4 October 3:00 – 4:30pm.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>