

8th February, 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:

When to our world the Saviour
came
the sick and helpless heard his
Name,
and in their weakness longed to see
the healing Christ of Galilee.

That good physician! Night and day
the people thronged about his way;
and wonder ran from soul to soul,
'The touch of Christ has made us
whole!'

His praises then were heard and
sung
by opened ears and loosened
tongue,

while lightened eyes could see and
know
the healing Christ of long ago.

Of long ago: yet living still,
who died for us on Calvary's hill;
who triumphed over cross and
grave,
his healing hands stretched forth to
save.

His sovereign purpose still remains
who rose in power, and lives and
reigns;
till every tongue confess his praise,
the healing Christ of all our days.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Psalm 23:1-6 and John 10:7-18 – The Shepherd King, our Patronal Scripture

What do we want for our family, friends and ourselves. It's often said, 'I just want them to be happy.' How do we define this happiness? Having friends, an education, a job and money, a home, good looks and lots of likes and followers on social media!

Jesus says I have come that you may have life, and life in all its fulness! At the beginning of Psalm 23, the author says, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need' or, 'I lack, no good thing. And as if this isn't enough, at the end is a promise of life eternal, the restoration of the perfect relationship with God and all of creation.

The way to gain this abundant life in all its fulness is found in the middle of the Psalm. Read vs 2-4. What is refreshing to our soul, our centre, our well-being? I love being outside, especially grand vista's and views – seeing beauty in nature, and I love spending time in the company of others, not least, family, and friends. But I also especially love reading God's love letters (the Bible) to me and seeing the vastness of the power and love of God in all he shares with me. And as I enjoy spending time talking with those I love, I enjoy talking with God and meeting up with him, with others – like today in church.

If we are to be refreshed in our souls – the centre of our being, then we need time with God. Sleep, food, rest, friends, work, all good things, but add God for the full set. Psalm 36:1, addressing God, says, 'For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.' Jesus in his other 'I am' statements tells us that he is the sustaining source of life and well-being – see John 6:20, 8:12, 11:25, 14:6, and 15:1.

What sustains us – gives us vision, perspective and hope. The psalmist says – read Psalm 23:4. Today, some live as though there vision and aspiration is simply money, sex, or power. Or that their perspective comes

from their society, or family values. And that their hope and security comes from relationships, their own abilities, or strengths. All of these are fragile things, placing a lot of pressure on us and others for our happiness.

Jesus offers us himself and his cross – two bits of wood, like the rod and staff which were signs of power and love. The cross is not a sign of failure and defeat but of his extraordinary power and love – a sacrificial love which extends through time and to all. The cross is our central image as Christians; it is our vision, it gives perspective, direction and provides our security and hope.

So, what do we want for our family, friends and ourselves. Life is on offer with Jesus, abundant, satisfying life. It will not be easy, it is a commitment which at times it feels like the whole world is against – but it's worth it. It is full, it is humanising and freedom.

Come, says Jesus, let's reason together, come says Jesus, taste and see, and enjoy for free. Come says Jesus and rest, come and find out what you are made for and live a life worth living, that joins in with eternity.

2nd Sunday before Lent (Sexagesima): Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, 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: February 18th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: February 25th at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- 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>