

12th July, 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:

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread thro' all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

Jesus! the name that charms our
fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,

'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled
sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.

To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever given
by saints below and saints above,
the Church in earth and heaven.

The Sermon by David Duffin

Read James 5:7-11, Matthew 7:24-29 – Living Patiently

James 5:7–11 teaches Christians to live with patience, perseverance, and hope while waiting for the Lord's return. James is concerned not just with belief, but with how faith is worked out in daily life. Throughout his letter, he stresses that genuine faith produces visible fruit. As James says earlier, "faith without works is dead." In other words, if someone has truly been born again, it should show in the way they live.

Jesus taught the same truth when he said that people are known by their fruit. Becoming a Christian begins with recognising our sin and receiving God's forgiveness through Jesus' death and resurrection. From that point, we begin a lifelong process of sanctification, growing in holiness and becoming more like Christ.

This passage especially highlights patience. James asks us, in effect, whether we really want to change and honour God in the way we think and live. Have we become spiritually comfortable, making little effort to grow? James' message is challenging, but so was Jesus' call to "take up your cross and follow me."

Christianity is not meant to be passive or easy. It is a call to change direction and adopt a new way of seeing the world.

James gives a reason for this seriousness: the Lord is coming back. We are not to live as if Jesus will never return. Instead, we should live in readiness, continuing God's work on earth and remembering that Christ the Judge will one day evaluate each person's life and reward them according to their works. The certainty of Christ's return gives urgency to faithful living.

James then turns to patience, reminding us that growth in holiness takes time and effort. We live in a culture that expects instant answers and quick results. But most of life is ordinary, repetitive, and often slow. The Bible consistently teaches growth over time. Waiting itself can be good for us. Galatians says that in due time we will reap if we do not give up. Patience is not wasted time; it is part of spiritual formation.

James illustrates this with three examples. First is the farmer, who must wait after planting for the crop to grow. Farming depends on weather, and weather cannot be controlled. The farmer must simply wait faithfully. Second are the prophets, who spoke God's word even though they were often ignored or rejected. Their responsibility was not success, but obedience. God determines the outcome.

Third is Job, perhaps the greatest biblical example of patience. The phrase “the patience of Job” has become part of everyday language for good reason.

Job was a wealthy and upright man who suffered terrible loss. Satan challenged his integrity, claiming that Job was only faithful because God had blessed him. God allowed Job to be tested through the loss of his possessions, his children, and his health, though not his life. Job grieved deeply, sat in ashes, and struggled to understand his suffering. His wife urged him to curse God, but he refused. His three friends tried to explain his suffering as punishment for sin, but Job rejected their simplistic answers. Elihu later suggested that suffering can be corrective or revealing, but Job still wanted an answer from God.

When God finally spoke, He did not give Job a direct explanation. Instead, He answered with questions that revealed the greatness of His wisdom, power, and control over creation. The point was clear: human understanding is limited, but God’s knowledge is far greater. Job responded with humility and repentance. In the end, God restored his fortunes.

Job’s story teaches that Christians are not exempt from suffering. We will not always understand why things happen, but God has a greater purpose. Job’s own words show his faith: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,” and “when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” His suffering was not meaningless. God was refining him, burning away what needed to go, and making him more holy.

James uses Job’s example to call believers to perseverance. The Christian life is a race, not a sprint. Paul could say at the end of his life, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Hebrews warns believers not to drift away, and urges us to run with perseverance, laying aside the sin that entangles us. This means the Christian life requires effort. God works in us, but we are still called to act: to put sin to death, to walk in newness of life, and to run in such a way as to win the prize.

When hardship comes, we must remember the purpose. Like Job, we may not know why we suffer, but we can trust that God is making us more holy. Physical training has some value, but godliness has value for both this life and the next.

Our present troubles are temporary, but God is preparing an eternal glory that outweighs them all. So we are called to keep going, trust God, and persevere with patience until the end.

6th Sunday after Trinity: Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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: July 15th and August 19th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: July 22nd 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>