

30th March, 2025

The paper-version Service



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:

Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.#

Of his deliverance I will boast,
till all that are distressed,
from my example comfort take
and lay their griefs to rest.

O magnify the LORD with me,
exalt his holy name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliverance he affords to all
who in his promise trust.

O taste and see that he is good;
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they
who in the LORD confide.

Fear him, you saints, and you will
then
have nothing else to fear;
make serving him your sole delight,
your wants shall be his care.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Isaiah 61:1-3, Mark 14:1-11 – Being Anointed (Mothering Sunday)

Today is Mothering Sunday, Mother's day, it's become in our society.

Our mothers give a lot. No mum's perfect but I hope you know something of a mother who has given for you. None of us are perfect as parents, but I hope as a parent, and maybe this is more true for those of you mums than us dads, that you've been able to give sacrificially.

I'm grateful for my mum's love and generosity – though my mum struggled to say 'I love you' I know that she did. My mum protected me as a child – on one occasion running down the road to 'save' my sister and I from a group of bullies who had surrounded us. And, my mum and dad supported Helen and I, when we gave up our jobs and went to train, without any grants, to train for Christian ministry.

The woman in our Bible story gave a lot. She gave all she had. The perfume was worth a year's wages. And she didn't just remove the stopper and pour out a little, but broke, smashed the jar – which in itself was valuable – and the whole contents released. The perfume and the jar are irrecoverable.

It is said that jar of nard was a valuable possession of prostitutes, allowing them to smell sweet for their clients. If this is the case and hints at the women's trade, then her act is all the more dramatic, she has given her all, risked her whole life, and given away her past, seeking a new start.

But, even if this is not the case, it's still an exceptional and very costly act, like the widow and her last two coins. It is a beautiful expression of love, an act of worship, of service. But not all appreciated it.

Some saw it as a waste. Is it? Surely it could have been put to a better purpose. Could it?

Jesus said her act would continue to be talked about – and here we are two thousand years later.

Jesus gave his all. Most likely it's the following day when Jesus is arrested and with the perfume still clinging to him, he goes to the cross. Jesus is poured out completely for us on the cross. His body is smashed, broken, and seemingly irrecoverable. This is a beautiful and very costly expression of love! God's love for you and love for me.

People didn't know what Jesus was doing, many didn't and many don't today appreciate what he has done. But it's still being talked about!

We know that by the most wonderful miracle of God, Jesus is raised – a new body, bearing the original scars but renewed, and undefeatable.

So how much will we give? Mum's risk so much for us – just starting with childbirth! This woman risked so much for Jesus, and Jesus risks so much for us.

What will you risk for him? Come to Jesus, receive his love, forgiveness, healing, and life. Receive his anointing upon you. Offer yourself, offer what you are. Be willing to sacrifice for Jesus. Be willing to smash up and break open those things which get in the way of the sweet smelling goodness pouring out of you, and tell the story of Jesus in your words and deeds today.

4th Sunday of Lent: Merciful Lord, absolve your people from their offences, that through your bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins which by our frailty we have committed; grant this, heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour, 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: April 16th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: April 23rd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- Easter Tea & Praise: Sunday 6th April, 3pm.
- 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.pariahofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>