

Welcome to
your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham



Glad and generous hearts Holy Communion

Easter IV, Sunday 30th April 2023

We gather

At home, have ready in an honoured place a portion of food and something to drink. It may be bread and wine or something else. Set your Bible alongside. You might light a candle.

Music as we gather: [Alleluia! Jesus is risen!](#)

1. Alleluia! Jesus is risen!
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!
Splendour, the Lamb, heaven forever!
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!

2. Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent:
death is defeated, and Easter is bright.
Angels announce, "Jesus is risen!"
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light.

*Jesus is risen and we shall arise:
give God the glory! Alleluia!*

3. Walking the way, Christ walking with us,
telling the story to open our eyes;
breaking the bread, showing his glory;
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise.

(words: Herbert F Brokering; music: David N Johnson)

When the song finishes we stand in silence. We sing:

HYMN

1. Good Christians all, rejoice and sing.
Now is the triumph of our King.
To all the world glad news we bring:

2. The Lord of Life is ris'n for ay:
bring flow'rs of song to strew his way;
let all mankind rejoice and say:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

3. Praise we in songs of victory
that Love, that Life, which cannot die,
and sing with hearts uplifted high:

4. Thy name we bless, O risen Lord,
and sing today with one accord
the life laid down, the life restored:

(words: Cyril Argentine Alington alt; music: Melody from Melchior Vulpius' 'Gesangbuch' [1609])

We acclaim:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with us all. **Amen.**

WELCOME, BANNS and NOTICES

We pray: **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.**

We seek forgiveness

CONFESSION

Deacon: Friends in Christ, let us return to the shepherd and guardian of our
souls, confessing our sins in penitence and faith:

Silence

**All: Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your
salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

FORGIVENESS *is declared:*

[May] Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy
upon *us*, pardon and deliver *us* from all *our* sins, confirm and strengthen
us in all goodness, and keep *us* in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

We stand to give thanks for forgiveness, singing THE GLORIA

1. Glory be to God in heaven,
songs of praise and joy we bring;
thankful hearts and voices raising,
to creation's Lord we sing.

Lord we thank you:
Lord we bless you:
glory be to God our King;
glory be to God our King.

2. Lamb of God who on your shoulders
bore the load of this world's sin:
only Son of God the Father
you have brought us peace within.
Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
now your glorious reign begin;
now your glorious reign begin.

3. You O Son of God are holy,
you we praise with one accord:
none in heaven or earth is like you,
only you are Christ the Lord:
with the Father
and the Spirit
ever worshipped and adored;
ever worshipped and adored.

THE COLLECT for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life,
raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of
righteousness that we may seek those things which are above, where he
reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for
ever. **Amen.**

READINGS [Acts 2:42-47](#) and [1 Peter 2:19-25](#)

HYMN [The Lord's my shepherd](#)

1. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green. He leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

2. My soul he doth restore again,
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake.

3. Yea, though I walk in death's dark
vale,
yet will I fear no ill.
For thou art with me, and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4. My table thou has furnishèd
in presence of my foes,
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5. Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me.
And in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

*(words: Psalm 23 from 'The Scottish Psalter' [1650];
music: Melody by Jessie Seymour Irvine; descant: William Baird Ross alt)*

We remain standing for the GOSPEL READING [John 10:1-10](#)

All: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end This is the Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

SERMON in Church is from David

For those at home:

To set John 10 in context you might like to read Ezekiel Chapter 34. There the prophet condemns the religious leaders of Israel for being complacent, greedy, neglectful shepherds of God's people. For Jesus to choose the shepherd imagery, and marginalise those in power as "thieves and robbers", so bursting the bubble of their inflated self-worth, is to place himself firmly in Ezekiel's camp. Now he offers himself as a shepherd for any who trust his voice: the voice we have heard in all those conversations in John's gospel.

He then offers another metaphor: the gate of the sheepfold. He pictures the sheep coming and going through the gate. Indeed, as the Word made flesh, Jesus is the one in whom heaven and earth meet. His very being shows earthy humanity and heavenly divinity together. He is a kind of threshold between us.

Importantly, Jesus does not see enclosure in the fold as once and for all. He is excited by the comings and goings of the sheep, their nourishment in the world, confident in their safe anchorage in the Shepherd's fold and under his gaze.

He will develop the shepherd metaphor further after his resurrection, inviting Peter to be shepherd for the church asking him three times to "feed my sheep." The watchful, protective, nurturing role is shared. As ever, God works in partnership with his people.

By the time we reach the events in Acts, we find ourselves in the presence of people whose identity is not shaped according to the rules of the Roman empire, nor the rules of the Temple, although they do gladly go there to pray. The community that defines itself by relationship with Jesus is one of generosity, reflection, outward looking concern for the world. They are not playing by the rules of jealousy and fear. This is what attracts people to join them.

Further on in time, the letter of Peter gives us a glimpse of the church working out what its bearing should be, living in the reality of Empire. I suggest reading a bit more than the set verses. It's hard at first, but read 2:13 –end. In Acts 2 Peter had demonstrated in brave public preaching his independence from the powers that execute and persecute. In this letter written in his name, we might at first be surprised to hear him say "accept the authority of every human institution...emperor...governor...Honour everyone....Honour the emperor." Is this a move backwards?

No: it is the next step forwards and it is radically defiant. Having firmly established that our identity is in the risen Christ, we are living as "free people" – a bold claim in an occupied land – then he says, we choose to cooperate with the earthly powers. It's our initiative to honour everyone – yes, *even* the Emperor. He somewhat shockingly tells slaves to accept the authority of masters with "deference." This does not for ever underwrite the institution of slavery, but it dares to imagine what marks out the life of a Christian slave. "As slaves of God," he dares to quip, we are "free people." That freedom is not to be used against others, but to go towards and to mark our relationships with grace. Clearly members of the church are being persecuted, but he says in that circumstance, you can be sure Christ himself is as close as can be. He did not abuse his abusers and did not resort to threats. It's hard to read, but even when persecuted, Peter

argues, those who define themselves in relation to Jesus the good shepherd are free to pray for those who would harm them.

We affirm our faith

We stand and at home, if able, we turn to look in the direction of Church, to affirm our faith in God, revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

APOSTLES' CREED

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

INTERCESSIONS

At home: having dwelt on shepherding, good and bad, pray for all in positions of leadership: those exposed to criticism; those tempted to use power for themselves; those whose service moves and impresses us; those who make us angry. Remembering Ezekiel's and Jesus' anger about dysfunctional leadership, ask God to help us stay generous even in our anger.

We might pray for the King anticipating Coronation, asking what should mark our Christian witness in this regime and this era.

Pray for any caught up in modern day slavery, for their courage and protection. Ask God to give them all they need to hold on to their precious identity in Christ, and show them what defiant love looks like in their circumstance. Expose the injustice and brutality of those who commoditise people and reveal how imprisoned they really are.

If there is anyone you are particularly worried about at the moment, especially anyone who in some sense you feel is going astray, ask God to show what fullness of life might look like for them.

Among those who are unwell we pray for Dorothy and Norman Brookes.

Among those who have died we remember Iain Galloway, Pat Warbrick and John Vincent Felton.

THE PEACE

Deacon: Jesus said "I have come in order that you might have life. Life in all its fullness." The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

HYMN [Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord](#)

*Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,
alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.*

1. Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
He is the King of creation.

2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth.
Jesus has died and is risen.

3. We have been crucified with Christ.
Now we shall live for ever.

4. God has proclaimed the just reward:
"Life for us all, alleluia!"

5. Come, let us praise the living God,
joyfully sing to our Saviour.

(words & music: Donald Fishel alt, arr Andrew Moore)

The Table is prepared in Church. At home, now is the time to say the Lord's Prayer (below) and consume the food and drink you have prepared, first praying:

God, we long for Communion. With this symbolic meal stir my hope for the fellowship meal we cannot yet see, and help me wait for it with patience. **Amen.**

(cf Romans 8:2)

We tell the story of salvation

Priest: The Lord is here.

All: God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Shepherding God, we praise and thank you because you gathered your flock around Abraham, and through Moses and Joshua you brought your sheep to a place of safety. In Jesus you came to us as a Passover Lamb to take away the sins of the world. As our everlasting good shepherd you promise that those who hear your voice shall never be in want, for you know your sheep by name and you call us your own and give to each of us a place in the sheepfold of your kingdom, where angels and archangels and all the company of heaven sing your unending praise.

We repeat after the cantor:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord!

God of power and God of might.

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes

in the name of the Lord most high.

Hosanna.

Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Sustaining God, as you lead your sheep to green pastures and guide them beside still waters, so you have led us to this table where in bread and wine you restore our soul. Send down your Holy Spirit and restore your church through the abundance of this sacred meal. As we remember the story of your Son's life laid down for us, sanctify this bread and cup and make them be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

A bell is rung

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new

covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

A bell is rung

Deacon: Great is the mystery of faith:

**All: Christ has died,
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

Saving God, your rod and staff comfort all who look to you in faith. Search out your sheep that are lost and bring them home. When you find them in the valley of fear, gather them in your arms. When they face evil in the presence of enemies, follow them with your goodness and mercy all the days of their lives. On that day when the shadow of death covers them, bring them to dwell in your home for ever. Shepherd us with all your saints of every age into your glorious presence, where we shall behold your Lamb seated in glory, most Holy Trinity, now and always. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Deacon: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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 for ever. Amen.**

Priest: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All: Though we are many, we are one body.
For we all share in one bread.**

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you. Eat in remembrance that he died and now lives for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

We sing: **Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Redeemer of the world, give us your peace. (x2)**

We pause to remember all who pray at home, then share the bread, now for us the body of Christ.

SONG during Communion [I give you a new commandment](#)

I give you a new commandment:
love one another; as I have loved you,
so you are to love one another.

If there is this love among you,
then all will know that you are my disciples.

(words: John 14:34-35; music: Peter Aston)

We are sent out

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with your Word [*and with the body and blood of Christ*]. Strengthen us in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

THE BLESSING

May Christ who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future, fill us with his new life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

HYMN [To God be the glory!](#)

1. To God be the glory! great things he hath done;
so loved he the world that he gave us his Son;
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord! let the earth hear his voice;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord! let the people rejoice:
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory; great things he hath done!*

2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
to ev'ry believer the promise of God;
the vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

3. Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.

We acclaim:

Deacon: Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ, Amen.



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Eucharistic Prayer from Joining the Angels' Song, Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher,
Canterbury Press 2016