

11th October, 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:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does its successive journeys run,
his kingdom stretch from shore to
shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no
more.

To him shall endless prayer be made,
and praises throng to crown his
head.

His name like sweet perfume shall
rise
with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue
dwell on his love with sweetest song,
and infant voices shall proclaim
their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he
reigns:
the prisoners leap to lose their
chains,
the weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring
the highest honours to our King,
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud amen.

The Sermon by David Bush

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 & Mark 6:6b-13 – God’s Body

This passage isn’t approached here as a theoretical lesson – this was addressing practical problem – this is about what the Corinthians did not what they thought.

Now we do need some social context ... Paul is writing to the church in Corinth – a massively diverse church ... we know from elsewhere in Corinthians. Rulers and administrators of the city, freed slaves, artisans, diaspora jews, gentiles. And even in those groups a remarkable diversity of ranks or grades. People who previously would never have sat down to eat together now were doing just that. Status and position must have been fluid and uncertain.

So the behaviour Paul seeks to address it is perhaps in a way understandable. People with *inconsistent* status — wealthy but of humble birth, educated but enslaved, prominent in the church but marginalised in the city — can to be anxious about it and to seek new ways to establish their standing.

I want to pick out the two middle ‘paragraphs’ (of course there were not paragraphs when it was written)

V 15-20 and V 21-26 Now these have a beautiful rhetorical resonance, and an identical conclusion, but speak to two faults we can sometimes see in churches, in bodies of believers ...

When you read these do you see the difference in these two paragraphs ...

In the first paragraph here the voice talking are those of those who feel they don’t have great gifts, or maybe social standing or position? Those who feel and even say that they don’t belong or can’t contribute because they feel they are not greatly gifted.

Paul is saying to them, 'You're wrong'. 'You are a part of this body, this community, this church' it doesn't matter what 'body part' you are you belong and you bring something of value.

And in the second section - it is written as spoken BY the important people with the seemingly 'greater' gifts, possibly those wanting to publicly secure some uncertain status. It is the voice of the gifted **excluding** and **diminishing** those with the seemingly 'lesser' gifts or position.

Being a church family means bringing all aspects of our diversity together. Not on the one hand underplaying ourselves because of the perceived humbleness of what we offer, and certainly not on the other hand belittling or excluding others because of the humbleness of their contribution.

So, we can ask ourselves as individuals, are we underplaying ourselves?

And/or are we granding ourselves up?

Are we going out of our way to make sure those less visible, less well positioned socially or economically or in age terms or gender terms are accorded special honour?

And a challenge as a church in what we do that might unintentionally embed structures that un-voice and belittle. Do we celebrate all contributions, or just the visible ones.

Now I'm not saying we are an evil bunch ... but I'm pretty sure if we examine ourselves and our ways of running out churches, we could pretty soon find one thing we ought to do differently to better BE the body of Christ we already are!

19th Sunday after Trinity: O God, forasmuch as without you we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; 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: 21st October at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 28th October 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>