

13th July, 2025

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 God beyond all praising,
we worship you today
and sing the love amazing
that songs cannot repay;

for we can only wonder
at every gift you send,
at blessings without number
and mercies without end:

we lift our hearts before you
and wait upon your word,
we honour and adore you,
our great and mighty Lord.

Then hear, O gracious Saviour,
accept the love we bring,
that we who know your favour
may serve you as our king;

and whether our tomorrows
be filled with good or ill,
we'll triumph through our sorrows
and rise to bless you still:

to marvel at your beauty
and glory in your ways,
and make a joyful duty
our sacrifice of praise..

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Hebrews 11:13-16; John 14:1-7; Hopeful Life

We continue our series Life to the Full. As we seek to live as people close to Jesus. That is, seeking the Kingdom, and living life to the full – as defined by the Gospel fruitfulness.

We all have a longing for home – a place. There's no place like home as Dorothy said in the Wizard of Oz. Many of us have experienced homesickness and being away from home we notice we miss the familiar, our bed, our routines, and maybe also our sense of belonging.

We all have a longing for home – but this for many is also a person or people. 'Welcome home' is said to us by some else and there are those who make us feel at 'home'. There are people we trust, people who know us, and probably know what we're thinking before we say it – we may feel at home with these people.

Which makes it even harder to know that this 'home' is temporary. It is so hard for us – being dislocated from those we know, but temporary indeed is any life here and the Bible doesn't hide it from us – read Psalm 103:15-16.

Our Hebrews reading tells of the longing for our true home, a true home that only God offers, a permanent and eternal home.

The disciples, as Jews, believed in God, a God who gave them a 'home' and who was their 'home'. Read Genesis 17:8 and Psalm 90:1. So, when Jesus says, 'I am going to prepare a place for you,' they would have understood this to be their inheritance – but probably at this stage their earthly inheritance. Subsequently, of course, it meant so much more. See Psalm 23:5-6, Revelation 21:3 and 1 John 4:16.

Jesus make clear that the way to home with God is himself. Jesus says that he is the way, the truth, and the life. This is such a unique statement which is totally at odds with any other world views, let alone religions. *The founders of every other major religion said, "I'm a prophet who shows you*

how to find God,” but Jesus taught, “I’m God, come to find you.” (Pastor and author Tim Keller)

And, if religion says do this and you’ll be saved, secularism and atheism essentially say, feel your own way. In reality, as in the ‘lost’ parables (see Luke 15), Jesus searches for us, the Holy Spirit lights the way, and the Father runs toward us. The whole Trinity is caught up with getting us home!

Because of what God does for us, we live now in hope. As 1 Corinthians 13:12 says, the day will come when we will see and know God, but we’re not there yet – see Hebrews 13:14. So we live in hope, and invest in our home with God.

As is said, home is where the heart is, see Matthew 6:19-33. Invest well, invest now for the life to come – read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

We are not home yet and we live with a hope and longing for our true and fulfilling home – see 2 Corinthians 5:1-5.

Everyone needs to find home, how awful to miss out – See Revelation 21:8. In today’s messed up world, where many live rootless lives and have little future hope, we have a message to share.

People often share their concerns about the weather, their family, the economy, or a world threatened by war. We have a hope of a secure home today in Jesus, and a certain hope forever. And, there will be people we can share with this week – ask God to give you opportunities. Read 1 Peter 3:15-16.

4th Sunday after Trinity: *O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, 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 16th and August 20th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: July 23rd and August 27th 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>