



Anglican Parish of
St Luke

Mosman

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

3 May 2020

Dear Friends,

In our reading today from John's Gospel, we are assured that those who have faith and belief in Jesus as the true Messiah can rely upon his commitment that nothing can separate them from the care of their Shepherd.



Thank you to everyone who responded so generously to Anglicare's request for food items and toiletries for distribution to those in need during this COVID-19 crisis. Community need is, indeed, great in these uncertain times. St Luke's collection has now concluded and Anglicare will be collecting the goods this week. Thank you all, once again, for your support of this worthwhile initiative.

Please continue to support our Parish financially in so far as you are able. Your offertory may be sent to the Parish Office by cheque (St Luke's Church Mosman, PO Box 162, Spit Junction NSW 2088), or deposited directly into our bank account (St Luke's Church Mosman, BSB 032-291, A/C 810105). Alternatively, you

can contribute to offertory at:
<https://donorbox.org/st-luke-s-anglican-church-mosman-support> (type or copy and paste into your browser).

I continue to assure you of my love and prayers for you all during the unusual circumstances in which we find ourselves. If you would like to contact me, you are welcome to do so. My details are on the back cover.

Fr Max

The Reverend Dr Max Wood,
Rector



PLEASE PRAY FOR...



Our Diocese, Northern Region and our local church community

The Archbishop: The Most Revd Dr Glenn Davies

The Regional Bishop: The Rt Revd Chris Edwards

Northern Region: Parishes of Belrose, Christ Church Northern Beaches; St Luke's Grammar School, Dee Why and Belrose Campus

Local churches: St Clement's Mosman; the Revd Stuart Smith, clergy and people

Missions 2020

Anglicare Sydney:

Mobile Community Pantry Program;

Bill Farrand, Anglicare Community Services Manager

Bush Church Aid:

BCA Indigenous Ministry Officer, The Revd Neville Naden and Mrs Kathryn Naden

Anglican Board of Mission:

Sustainable Livelihoods Program, Kenya;

The Revd John Deane, ABM Executive Director

Those we are holding in prayer

The Immediate Sick:

Alex Dimitric, Lisette Crowle, Mary Douglas, Pam Brooks, Liam Gorman, Henry Long, Peter Wheatly, Brian Miles, John Amor

Those Requiring On-Going Prayer:

John Dimitric, Irina Dimitric, Justin Reid, Heather, Bernie Walsh, Keren Snell, Benji Morris, Christine Hurford, Shannour, Chloe Turner, Denise Thomas, Eileen Menzies

People in Residential and Home Care:

Dawn Holdaway, Ruth Burleigh, Richard Lloyd, Betty Gemmell, Mary Shuttleworth, Elaine Porter, Helen Hubby, Bev and Dorothy Bashford, Brian Miles, Pat Wood, Jean Barton, Rosalie and Denis Pearson, Robin and Kevin Wilks

A Prayer for God's Peace

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in every heart,
the true love of peace,
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth;
that in tranquility your Kingdom may go forward
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

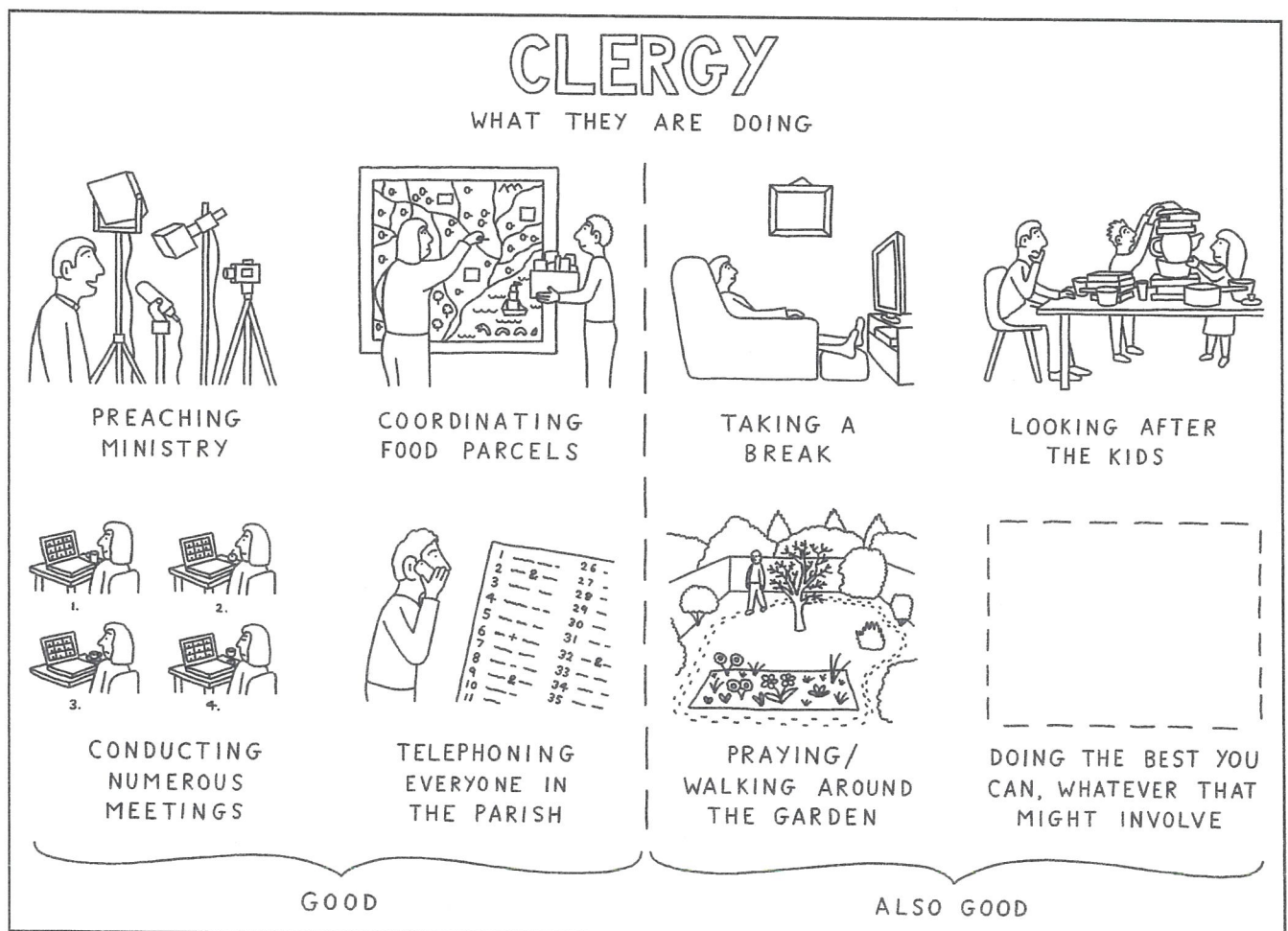
From Celebrating Common Prayer: A Version of the Daily Office SSF (1992) Mowbray

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

John 10:1-10

Jesus said: "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."



Anglican Parish of St Luke, Mosman

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Temporary Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9.30am - 1pm

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Parish Contacts

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David Burke	Mb: 0414 824 035

St Luke's is a place of rich and diverse liturgy, where life and faith connect. We are a progressive community that welcomes all people regardless of gender, age, race, sexual orientation or religion.

Sermon 3 May 2020 – Easter 4

Natalie McDonald, Lay Minister

Readings:

Acts 2:42-47

John 10:1-10

"May the words of my mouth and the mediation of all our hearts be now and always acceptable in your sight, O Lord our strength and redeemer."

Introduction

Welcome to Good Shepherd Sunday.

I often wonder how much Christian art would disappear, if we didn't have the 'Good Shepherd' image of Jesus!

Even though we call it Good Shepherd Sunday, Jesus doesn't actually say "...I am the good shepherd..." until verse 11 - so we don't get to hear it this morning. Instead, we focus on Jesus as the door or gate of the sheepfold.

Of course Jesus as shepherd, makes for a far more **natural** comparison than comparing Jesus to a **gate**. So how can Jesus be both? These two images are part of an extended metaphor that speaks of sheep, shepherds, gates, gatekeepers, strangers, thieves and bandits. All of these images are introduced, and all are a part

of this extended metaphor that contributes to an understanding of who Jesus was, and who **we** are in relation to **him**.

Jesus begins by describing who he is not.

Jesus starts by describing who he is not. In verse 1 we hear that those who climb into the sheepfold in a furtive way are thieves and bandits, who don't care about the sheep, but only about their own gain (10:1). On the other hand, the shepherd enters the sheepfold openly, through the gate (10:2). He is recognized by the gatekeeper, who lets him in, and by the sheep, who know his voice (10:3). When he calls to his sheep, they follow him, and he leads them out to pasture (10:4). The sheep won't follow a stranger, rather they run away, because they don't recognize the voice of the stranger. (10:5).

But then things become a little strange, when in verse 6 we hear that "...Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them..."

Do **you** understand what he was talking about? No? Neither do I!

His listeners were having trouble with what he was saying, and they lived in an agricultural setting, and here **we** are in urban Mosman, where very few of us have had contact with sheep, let alone First Century Middle Eastern animal husbandry practices. The closest many of **us** get to sheep, is the roast lamb being carved on the table, or the Ugg boots on our feet.

But Jesus keeps on going, saying to them in verse 7, "...Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep..." (10:7). He describes all who came before him as thieves and bandits to whom the sheep did not listen (10:8). Again Jesus says, "...I am the gate...", and then he adds: "...Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture..." (10:9). Whereas "...the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy..." Jesus says, "...I came that they may have life, and have it **abundantly**..." (10:10).

The gate keeps the sheep together in the sheepfold during the night, safe from thieves and predators. During the day the gate is opened so that the sheep can go out, following their shepherd, to find pasture. Some sheepfolds, especially those unattached to a larger settlement or dwelling, are circular walls of stones, topped by thorny barriers. There's a small opening for the sheep to pass through. Once they're all in, instead of closing a hinged gate, the shepherd simply lies across the opening, so that **nothing** or **no one** can get at the sheep without getting by **him** first. So this shepherd **literally** makes himself into a barrier-gate, requiring not only care, but a great deal of courage. If any marauders or predators are to get at the sheep, they will only do so over the dead body of the shepherd. This way the flock thrives. This is a place where the sheep can feel **protected** and **secure**.

When Jesus reveals that he is the gate of the sheepfold, he is saying that he guards and protects his sheep from danger, and he provides for their nourishment, for their life in abundance. In these pandemic times where do **we** find a place where we can feel **protected** and **secure**? For some of us going outside is not that sort of place.

We feel that we need to put on a new kind of armour, consisting of masks and gloves and sanitisers to feel safe enough to even get out the front door

Life in abundance

So, what is this life in abundance that Jesus promises? The whole of John's Gospel is focused on this gift of life. "Life" or "eternal life" in John's Gospel is not just about life after death.

It is life that begins here and now;

- It's knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent.
- It's knowing the voice of the good shepherd who truly cares for us.
- It's life in community, finding security and nourishment as part of his flock.
- It's life that abounds in meaning, and value, and endures even **beyond** death.

Jesus ministry was about healing, inclusion and security. When Jesus healed people he changed their lives. They were saved from being isolated and marginalized. They would know the safety and security of community. This safety, security, inclusion and community is for **ALL** of us.

Conclusion

By the 4th century the iconography of Jesus as shepherd was gradually replaced by Jesus as the elevated ruler over all, as Constantine united the church with the state. As the church became an expression of imperial power, the humble shepherd's staff

was replaced with a gilded crozier; the crown of thorns was displaced by the triple tiara of the pope.

So in urban Mosman, centuries away from the agricultural practices of first century Middle East, and the bucolic pastoral scene of sheep and images of rustic charm that is so much a part of how we view Christianity, how can we relate to Good Shepherd Sunday? What does it mean for us as followers of Jesus today, to be protected by the gate and the shepherd, to be “saved,” to have life in abundance?

It seems about time to re-frame Good Shepherd Sunday, to remove it from agricultural scenes. Good Shepherd Sunday really means to focus on where following Jesus meets our most **powerful** needs - where following Jesus is the way to feeling **nourished, protected and secure**.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen