

PARTNERS

weekly newsletter



28th April 2024 - 5th Sunday of Easter

I was driving back from Gatwick just last week and, as Sarah and I drove south we saw the spring lambs in fields and, as I reflected upon that today I was reminded of the words of Jesus in John chapter 10 where he reflects upon a similar image from his day.

Firstly, Jesus reflects upon the image of a sheepfold and says of himself, "I am the gate for the sheep," (John 10v7). That is, he is the one who 'opens the door of heaven' for you and for me. What a wonderful truth that is. As a vicar I have done hundreds of funerals over the years, and visited countless people in hospital as the end of their life approaches. In all such cases I have sought to bring Christ's comfort to the dying, and his comfort to their relatives. It is a great privilege to do so. Wonderfully, as Christians, death is nothing to fear, rather it is a gateway to an eternity of blessings with God. And Jesus is the gate; he opens that gateway for us.

Jesus then goes on to change his imagery and states in verse 14, "I am the good shepherd." Like a shepherd caring for his sheep Jesus is the one who knows us, who loves us and who cares for us throughout this life and, when the time is right, into the next. Jesus is indeed the good shepherd and we can entrust ourselves, and those whom we love, into his care, now and for eternity.

But Jesus then goes on to say in verse 15 that, like a good shepherd he 'lays down his life for the sheep.' Now, I suspect that only an exceptional shepherd would go that far to protect the sheep, but Jesus is, of course, exceptional. His love for us is so great that he did indeed lay down his life for us, as we celebrated on Good Friday.

So, perhaps as you enjoy the new life of Spring, and if you see the sheep and the lambs in the fields you might reflect upon these wonderful truths: Jesus is the gate for you and for me, and he is the Good Shepherd. We can therefore entrust ourselves and those whom we love to him, now and for eternity.

St Mary's
Fordingbridge
SP6 1BB

St Mary's
Breamore
SP6 2DF

Holy Ascension
Hyde
SP6 2QJ

St Giles
Godshill
SP6 2JJ

St Boniface
Woodgreen
SP6 2AJ

St Mary's
Hale
SP6 2RF

Sandleheath
Uniting Church
SP6 IPT

Rev Luke Wickings

We welcome all, especially visitors and those attending for the first time. If you need gluten free wafers at Communion, please speak to someone at the door before the service.

Please take this newsletter home with you for the week ahead. God Bless!

Readings for this Week: 28th April 2024

5th Sunday of Easter

COLLECT:

Risen Christ,
your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father.

AMEN.

PSALM 22:25-31

25. From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you.
26. The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever.
27. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,
And all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
28. For the kingdom is the Lord's
And he rules over the nations.
29. How can those who sleep in the earth bow down in worship,
Or those who go down to the dust kneel before him?
30. He has saved my life for himself; my descendants shall serve him;
This shall be told of the Lord for generations to come.
31. They shall come and make known his salvation to a people yet unborn,
Declaring that he the Lord has done it.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 8:26-40

Philip baptises a Gentile, whose affirmation of faith is an early form of the creed.

²⁶ An angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to

worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' ³¹ He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' ³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' ³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

At the end, the Reader says:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

THE GOSPEL READING

Please stand and turn to face the Gospel Reader

When the Gospel is announced, the Reader says:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *John*

Glory to you, O Lord.

(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)

John 15:1-8

Jesus the vine, whose fruit we are expected to bear.

Jesus said to his disciples: ¹ 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'

At the end, the Reader says:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

(At the end, the Reader says:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to thee, O Christ.)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

AMEN

Readings for Sunday 5th May: Ps.98, I John 5:1-6, John 15:9-17

Please note the church office will be **shut** on **Friday 26th April** and **Friday 3rd May**

Sarum College Library is holding more open days for the Saint John's Bible, a rare facsimile of the first hand-written, hand-illustrated bible to be produced in 500 years. All seven volumes will be on display in the Seaton Room from Thursday **25th April to Sunday 28th April**, from **10am to 5pm** each day. The information is on the College website at <https://www.sarum.ac.uk/short-courses/sjb-open-days/>. Do join us for the chance to see these stunning volumes displayed together. Guides will be on hand to answer questions and visitors may take photographs.

Greetings to my brothers and sisters here in Fordingbridge and hereabouts!
I will be having a few **coffee mornings in May** to get to know you all. They will be on each **Wednesday** throughout **May** EXCEPT for the 8th. It will be an open house from 10am until 12 midday and there will be tea, coffee etc and biscuits and good company. I very much look forward to getting to know you all better.

Sarah (71 Church Street 😊)

Plant Sale - Fordingbridge Choral Society Saturday morning, **4th May 2024** in St Mary's Church Hall from **10am until 12 noon**. As well as all the plants there will be Cakes and Bakes, Jams and Preserves and Bring and Buy. Admission is £1, and please bring your own bags! Refreshments available too.

Woodgreen Model and live Steam Show: Yes, we are back again at Woodgreen village hall (SP6 2AJ) on **4th and 5th May from 10am till 5pm**. Suitable for all the family. We have model railway layouts indoors, live steam outdoors, crafts in the church next door. Home made refreshments available through out the day. Raising money for Spires Smiles, Alzheimer's society and St Mary's church, Hale roof fund.

Thy Kingdom Come - a message from Luke

Thy Kingdom Come is a national and international prayer initiative started by the present Archbishop of Canterbury. Its aim and purpose is to encourage churches to pray for God's kingdom to come in our communities, in our families, across the world and, of course, in our own lives. It seems to me that we should join in with praying for God's kingdom to come in our churches and in our communities. I would therefore like to see a variety of prayer meetings of various sorts happening in our churches. Thy Kingdom Come runs from Ascension Day, 9 May until Pentecost, 19 May. Could I therefore invite anyone interested, from any of our churches, to join me on **Sunday 5 May** for a **planning meeting** at the rectory. This will be held at **2pm**. Alternatively, if you would like to email me or call me that would be great; or, as a local church community, if you can just plan some prayer meetings, then please do so. All I ask is that you email the dates to the parish-office so that people from across the benefice can join your meetings. Meetings can be in churches, in homes, in halls or via zoom. The key thing is for us to spend time in prayer as churches. Our churches and our communities need God's Kingdom to come. Let's pray for that to happen. Luke.

SP6 Friendship Group – Our friendship group will be held on **Tuesday 7th May** from 10.00am – 12.00md at the Ship Inn, Fordingbridge High Street. This group is for anyone who is bereaved or lonely and would like a cuppa and a friendly chat. We also organize outings, theatre trips and garden visits. If anyone would like to join us do come.

APCM – The Annual Meeting of the whole Parish is on **May 8th at 7.30pm** it is an opportunity to look back at what has happened in the previous year and to look forward with our new rector to the coming year. The Local Church committees will meet before then and each Church area will need to appoint members to the local councils. At the APCM we will need to appoint two wardens from each church area and one lay member (the deanery reps have a three year tenure). Mark Ward is the deanery representative for Fordingbridge so if elected to continue as warden there will need to be two lay representatives from Fordingbridge so that each local church area has the agreed total of four members. Nomination forms for wardens, local and PCC reps will be available in the churches. If you have any questions, do please discuss with your churchwardens.

Fordingbridge LCC (St Mary's and Sandleheath Uniting Church) – very important and urgent. At the meeting on 21st April all those nominated as LCC members were elected. Our first meeting is 13th May 2024 7.30 in St Mary's Hall. We need 4 people on PCC. Mark Ward and Ian Newman agree to be nominated (Mark as a Churchwarden) however we need one other LCC member to sit on PCC **and another churchwarden**. If you would consider volunteering please contact Mark asap. If you are not already an LCC member we can co-opt you. It is **vital** we have two Wardens. We must do this by May 8th for the Annual Parish Church Meeting where nominations for PCC are agreed. Mark@fordingbridge.com or 07833 477834.

Quiz night on the 10th of May from 8pm to 10.30pm in aid of Bee Against Poverty Zambia at the **United Reformed Church**. £12 per team for a maximum of 6 players. Money raised will go towards Bee Against Poverty Zambia who are raising funds for an orphanage project in Kitwe Zambia. If you would to enter a team please contact via email: beeagainstpovertyzambia@gmail.com or phone 01725 518053 by **1st May**

1st Fundraiser of the Year for St Mary's Church, Fordingbridge. Saturday **May 11th** in Church starting at 2.30pm. Join us for a delicious full **Afternoon Tea with Music Concert**. All proceeds to Church funds. "Tea and Tunes" tickets £15 available to buy or reserve (so we know how many to cater for) from Jean Groves (tel 01202 822187), Jane Calver (tel 01425 656189), Viv Finch (tel 01725 512267). Please advise of any dietary requirements. There will be a raffle so any prizes you may wish to bring will be very welcome.

"The Chosen" Season 1 Free Film Shows at the Town Hall FB: Catch it while you can! "The Chosen" is a historical drama based on the life of Jesus Christ, seen through the eyes of those who knew him. Those who watch these films have found characters in the Gospels have come alive. One filmgoer said: "I didn't understand it at first, but it is getting easier and I am definitely coming to the next one." If you haven't been yet, **Come and see what it is like, and bring some friends!** Free Tickets, (from the AVCM Charity Shop and The Branch, or online from www.ticketsource.co.uk) include Refreshments: Tea, Coffee, Hot Chocolate, & sweet or savoury snacks.

This authentic recreation of Bible stories, with back stories that are credible, is not to be missed. So far there have been 3 Shows in the Town Hall, and there are 7 more Episodes from Series 1 to come in 2024. 7.30 for 8pm on Saturday nights monthly, with the **next Film Night on 18 May**. Small yellow "Chosen" cards with dates will soon be available in any of our churches. Or look on Facebook for Churches Together in Fordingbridge & District. To explore more, **download the free 'The Chosen' App** on your mobile phone Or look at www.thechosen.tv. "The Chosen" is now one of the most watched shows in the world: it's been streamed by over 172 million people, and made available in 50 languages, with many more coming soon.

Open Gardens 25th -27th May - Over the late May Bank Holiday weekend a number of gardens mainly belonging to St Mary's Fordingbridge congregation members will be open to visit in aid of church funds. Please watch this space for further details so you can visit as many as you like! Some will also offer refreshments. There will be flyers available and details on the AVC website.

The PARISH MISSION MATTERS GROUP (PMMG) are meeting on Monday 3 June at 7pm in Godshill. This gathering is open to all with a passion for Christian Mission of any kind. Mark your diary NOW! Further details from Pat B if you haven't been before (07985 938644)

Ruth Crosland - Ordination Sunday June 30th at 10am at **Winchester Cathedral**. You are all welcome to join Ruth at this very special event. After the service light refreshments will be served in a hotel close to the Cathedral. To enable Ruth to collect numbers it would be helpful to advise **Zoe at the Parish Office** (office@avonvalleychurches.org.uk or 01425 653163)or Ruth (Ruth.Crosland@avonvalleychurches.org.uk or 07855 210769) if you plan to attend. Please can you put "June 30th" in the heading/subject line. As parking is at a premium on Sundays in Winchester transport may be available from Fordingbridge, departure time approx.. 8.15am and a return to Fordingbridge at approx. 5pm. Anticipated approximate cost £18 per person. Please also indicate whether you wish to have a seat.

ITEMS FOR PARTNERS need to be sent to the Church Office (e-mail address below) by 5.00p.m. on **Tuesdays**. Please put 'Partners' in the e-mail subject line. Thank you, Zoe

Reflection

Since Easter Sunday, when the clocks moved to British Summer Time, we can see the days becoming longer. The evenings are beginning to stretch out now which is so noticeable when we have fine weather. A beautiful sunset enables us to allow ourselves a glimpse of God's glory in His creation, and an opportunity to rejoice and give Him thanks.

Let us pray

We come before you our God and Sustainer, remembering that you are our Creator and the source of all being. Out of your love the universe was born. From darkness, you put in place all that is needed for growth, and saw that it was good. You have put this world into our hands, may we recognise your Spirit within it, disturbing and challenging us to care for creation. Lord we remember that we are called by you to nourish the earth and its diversity of life, to share the gifts you have given with one another and with the poor of the world.

Amen

We are custodians of God's creation and must care for the world and one another remembering especially at this Eastertide, that both creation and life are God's precious gifts to us.

Mary Melbourne (Breamore Churchwarden, LLM and Anna Chaplain)

CHURCH OFFICE IS OPEN TO VISITORS between 10.00 am and 12.00

Contact via Email : Office@AvonValleyChurches.org.uk or call 01425 653163 between 10.00 am and 12.00 or leave a message Website : www.AvonValleyChurches.org.uk

Rector -Rev Luke Wickings. Contact via Email rector@avonvalleychurches.org.uk or call 01425 839937 / 07983 398984. Please note Luke's day off is Friday

Fifth Sunday of Easter

28th April 2024

**Online services available via Facebook or Website
at 'Avon Valley Churches'**

Sunday	8.15 am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion (BCP)
28th Apr	10.00 am	Breamore	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Sung Communion
	10.00 am	Hyde	Holy Communion followed by a Bring and Share lunch
	10.00 am	Woodgreen	Holy Communion
	10.45 am	Sandleheath	Methodist Service
	11.15 am	Breamore	Baptism
	6.00 pm	Fordingbridge	Sung Evensong
Wed 1st	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Heather Cottage, Rockford	Bible Study
Sunday	8.15 am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion (BCP)
5th May	10.00 am	Breamore	Morning Service
	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Allsorts
	10.00 am	Hyde	Morning Service
	10.45 am	Sandleheath	Methodist Service
	11.00 am	Woodgreen	Steam Show Worship
	6.00 pm	Fordingbridge	The Six O'Clock Service