

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

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## Words of welcome

Welcome to our worship on this Fourth Sunday of Easter. Today we hear Jesus describing himself as the gate to the sheep fold and reminding us of his promise of life in all its fullness. No matter how we are feeling today I pray that each of us, in our own way, would know the protection of God and the fullness of God's love.

## Opening words

Open the gate of our hearts Lord  
That we may meet you today

Open the gate of our hearts Lord  
That we may find you in friend and stranger

Open the gate of our hearts Lord  
And drive out all that keeps us from you

Open the gate of our hearts Lord  
And come and dwell with us, today and always

## Collect

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:  
teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command,  
that all your people may be gathered into one flock,  
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

## A reading from John's Gospel

Jesus said to the Pharisees: <sup>1</sup>'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. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.'<sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

## Reflection by Tom

### Intercessions & The Lord's Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that you call each of us by name. Help us as a church community to remember in these troubling times that your call is ever present, and that in you, we find peace.

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks that your voice goes out to all in positions of power. We ask for your guidance and wisdom for those in authority, and pray that they would know your message of love and peace as they navigate the road ahead.

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the source of all life. We give you thanks for the gift of new life and thank you especially for the safe arrivals of Baby Alma and Baby Chimamaka. We pray for their health and for family who care for them.

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, through your ministry you showed compassion for those who were sick and alone. We give you thanks for our wonderful NHS and all those who work so hard to care for others. We pray that you would give them strength. We remember especially staff and residents at our Local Health Centres and at Monet Lodge, Ashley House, Holmfield and Brocklehurst.

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, we know that you care for us all as the sheep of your pasture. We remember those who are suffering with ill health physically, mentally and spiritually, and pray that you would draw close to them.

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for being the gate through which all who enter shall be saved. We ask that you bring into your presence all who have died. We pray for the souls of Wally Marshall, Jean Peacock, Leslie Powner, Peter Barker, Alan Heald and Jack Bryan.

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

We join all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus gave us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;**

**thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## Closing Response

As a shepherd cares for his sheep  
May we be aware of God's care

As a shepherd remains with his sheep  
May we be aware of God's presence with us

As a shepherd feeds his sheep  
May we be fed with God's word

Let us pray

Merciful Father,  
you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,  
and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again:  
keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Blessing

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
that great shepherd of the sheep, make us perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

## Hymn

**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.**

**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.**

**Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,  
yet will I fear no ill;  
for thou art with me, and thy rod  
and staff me comfort still.**

**My table thou hast furnishèd  
in presence of my foes;  
my head thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.**

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

