

**Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton  
and Hollybush**



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**Welcome-do have a glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready.**

**HYMN**

He has given us new life and hope  
by raising Jesus from the dead.  
Alleluia! Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Faithful one, whose word is life:  
come with saving power to free our praise,  
inspire our prayer and shape our lives  
for the kingdom of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND ABSOLUTION**

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.  
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice  
and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and  
true heart.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you and against our  
neighbour, in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died  
for us, forgive us all that is past;  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of  
life to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
 who forgives all who truly repent,  
 have mercy upon you,  
 pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
 confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
 and keep you in life eternal;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
 and peace to his people on earth.  
 Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and  
 Father, we worship you, we give you thanks,  
 we praise you for your glory.  
 Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
 Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of  
 the world: have mercy on us;  
 you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
 receive our prayer.  
 For you alone are the Holy One,  
 you alone are the Lord,  
 you alone are the Most High,  
 Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
 in the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.****

### **THE 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**

**READING : Acts 4: 5-12. 1 John 3: 16-24**

**(At home, please also read John 10. 11-18)**

### **REFLECTION**

The Good Shepherd Sunday. This metaphor is familiar to us.

Jesus as the good shepherd, laying down his life for the sheep. The shepherd who gently firmly led us by the hand, prepared pasture for us with wolves all around, like disease , illness and injury, catastrophes that suddenly strike without warning, but God leads us through dark valleys, and the shadows, with His goodness and mercy. Psalm 23.

We human beings are vulnerable. We know that life is infinitely fragile and easily broken and hurt. Our lives are like beautiful dainty glass sculptures.

Sheep are seen as rather dumb animals. They are not unintelligent, but they have a strong herd instinct is stronger than their reasoning and intelligence. Human beings are compared to sheep. Our own herd instinct can become stronger than our intelligence. We too can just follow the leader.

We know that smoking can cause cancer but people continue to smoke. We know a balanced diet and a healthy weight is better for us. We all know that the icebergs are melting and that we are experiencing global warming which will only get worse, but we still use fossil fuels all over the world, even if the environment is destroyed. We know that many species are either dwindling, extinct or under threat.

Sheep also wander away from their shepherd and likewise with human beings, we wander away from God. Some people may say "I don't believe in God. I don't believe in Christ. drift away from Christ, ever so slowly. And say in a crisis, "Where is God? Where is Christ? "

Sheep are also herd animals who follow the crowd. When sheep get lost, they do not find their way home. And so it can be with the church. When people, like sheep, get lost, we need to go and find those people who are lost. That is why in the church we are called, "one, holy, catholic, and APOSTOLIC church. apostolic, means sent. We Christians are sent out into the world to find all those sheep out there who are lost.

A personal relationship is formed between the shepherd and the sheep, He knows the name of the sheep, He knows your name. Christ knows you.

And where does Jesus, our good shepherd, lead us? To green pastures and still water. The green pastures are the food that God provides for us; that is, the Bible, the Word, the Sacraments. We nourish and are nourished by the spiritual sustenance of the green pastures. Jesus also leads us to still waters and the still waters represent the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

In the Gospel story, Peter and John are on their way to the Temple to pray in Jerusalem when they saw a man who had been lame since birth begging by the Gate. Peter says "I have no gold or silver, but what I

have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk!" And the man not only stands and walks, but starts leaping around in exultation and delight. Because Peter boasted about it and said it was by the power of God, he and John were arrested. They appear before priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees. Questioned "By what power...did you do this? Who authorized you to do and say these things?" Only such authority was through the religious leaders.

Even today, that power of the Holy Spirit can be threatening, even frightening, especially when it seems to wrestle power and control from the our usual structures! The power of the Risen Christ is to transform, but also reminds us of the resistance of people. As we emerge from Lock Down, is it stirring us to be more imaginative or creative in the way we are 'church' in 2021?

Are we ready to be shepherd? In 1 John, we hear, "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

God's love is active. We have a choice, to either love as God requires us to or not to. That is what free-will entails. And to daily seek a higher level of love that can only be applicable within our lives through the

power of the Holy Spirit. Love is the compelling force that through the mercy and grace of God, we are truly capable of extending the same to one another.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

A new commandment and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who laid his life down for you and love one another.

After sixty years of contemplation, the apostle John writes these profound words, "By this we know love." Because the shepherd lays down his life for the sheep and is willing to die for them and sacrifice his life for them. Five times in John 10 we hear that phrase: the shepherd was willing to lay down his life for the sheep. That is the essence of what Jesus did. That is the essence of what the good shepherd did. He laid his life down for another.

"It is in giving that we receive. It is in dying (to self) that we are born to a living hope." St. Francis

Jesus said, "And this is love...that we lay down our lives for each other. Not in word and tongue but in deed in action."

He also said, “No greater love has a person than this than they lay down their life for their friends.”

This is God’s commandment: to believe. To love.

Are we willing and able to be those shepherds for God’s Kingdom here in this Benefice?

**Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Please ask for any additional prayers

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

## **THE LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

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

**thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done ;  
in 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.**

## **THE PEACE**

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said ‘Peace be with you’.

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord.  
Alleluia!

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

## **THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;  
 he was buried;  
 he was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures;  
 afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles:  
 this we have received, and this we believe.  
**Amen.**

### THE THANKSGIVING PRAYER

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

By his death he has destroyed death,  
 and by his rising to life again he has restored to us everlasting life.  
 We therefore lift our voices to proclaim your glory as we sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord,  
 God of power and might,  
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 Hosanna, in the highest.  
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
 Hosanna, in the highest.**

Here is the table set for a special meal.  
 The bread, the wine, prepared and presented.  
 Ready to be served and shared.  
 We remember Jesus sharing a meal like this with his disciples, his friends.  
 He included everyone, those he could trust and those he could not trust.  
 Today we are his disciples, his friends.  
 Each one of us is welcome. How amazing it is to be loved and wanted even when we have not been perfect.  
 How wonderful it is to be included as we are.

**Words of Remembrance: the communion story**  
 When Jesus shared the bread with his friends, he explained that he is the Bread of Life. Like bread, Jesus nourishes and strengthens us so that we can know right and wrong and not be confused.

When we eat the bread together, we are strengthened as a community to remember Jesus and do the things Jesus would do in our world. Jesus also used a cup of the fruit of grapes to teach his disciples. He compared the red wine to blood, to help us remember the suffering in the world.

Drinking the wine together helps us remember that we are all part of a special agreement, a covenant, with God.

God loves us so much that when we make mistakes, or when we make bad choices, God has agreed to forgive us and give us a second chance, every time. This is ordinary bread and ordinary wine.

But when we eat the bread together and drink the wine together, something extraordinary happens which brings us closer to Jesus and to one another. We become the 'Body of Christ.'

Which means that our eyes and ears see and hear what Jesus would see in our world. And our arms and hands do Jesus's work to help others.

## SHARING THE BREAD AND WINE

When you take a piece of bread, **please hold it up.**  
Then let us all eat together.  
The Bread of Life shared with you.  
Be strengthened to do what is right.

When you take a cup of juice/wine, **please hold it up.**  
The Cup of Forgiveness shared with you.  
Remember God's agreement to give each of us  
another chance to be better people.

God of love, we thank you for this Easter celebration and for strengthening us with the Bread of Life. Thank you for forgiving us and giving us another chance to do what is right. We promise to be the living Body of Christ, nourished by this special meal. We promise to use our arms, hands, feet, eyes and ears to follow Jesus.

Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.  
**Therefore let us keep the feast**

**(consume)**

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

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.**

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.**

## HYMN

### THE BLESSING

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

**Amen.**

God the Son, who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

**Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples, empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

**Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**