

SONG

The Lord is my shepherd

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sZaJpllj_c

Words and music

The Lord is my Shepherd, and I want to follow,
wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.
Over the mountains, the waters and by-ways,
valleys and highways he's waiting for me.
I want to go to meet him there, to lay myself down in his love.

*The Lord is my shepherd, and I want to follow,
wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.*

And while on the journey to where we are going,
he promised to be there to help us along.
And over the mountains we'll walk on together,
to know all the wonders he's given to me
I want to go to meet him there, to lay myself down in his love.

*The Lord is my shepherd, and I want to follow,
wherever he leads me, wherever he goes.*

LicenSing No. 604575 / C.C.L.I. No. 237097

BENEDICTION

May God bless you in your staying in, and in your going out.
May God bless you in your times of idleness and in your times
of busyness.

May God bless you in your thinking and in your doing,
For this day and all the days that lie ahead.

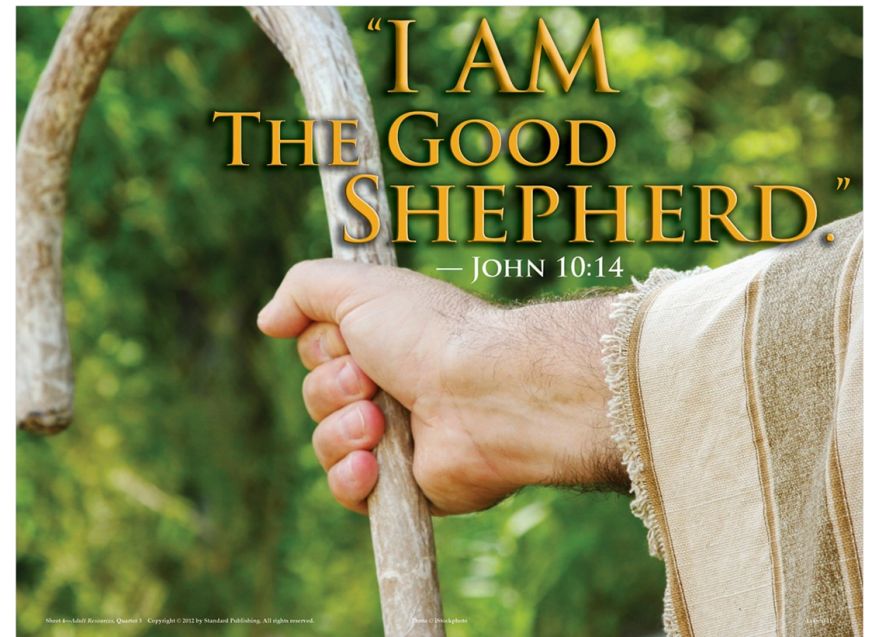
May you be confident in the presence of God,
Father Son and Holy Spirit,
Creator, Redeemer and Source of strength,
Who is with you this day and all days, Amen.



Easter 4A

3rd May, 2020

Westmead Uniting Church
A congregation of Parramatta Mission



WELCOME

Each time we worship apart we are reminded that there will soon come a time when we can worship together. This time of Covid 19 will come to pass but the love that we can share together does not end, for nothing can separate us from each other or from God who draws us together.

CALL TO WORSHIP

As we gather, wherever we may be, locked in, at work or with another, we come knowing that the ever-living Christ, the good Shepherd has called us by name into his flock and encircled our lives with his unconditional love.

*The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not want.*

The flock know the Good Shepherd's voice; and he calls each of us by name,
He leads me to green pastures and guides me beside still waters.

Our Good Shepherd is with us always, to the end of time and far beyond.
*Goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.*

Let us come and worship God.

Loving Shepherd you laid down your life for your sheep: we remember all who are in your eternal care.

We give thanks for the courage and selflessness of those who in peace or in war, have given their lives that others might live. May we, like them, offer our lives in love for others.

Lead us through the green pastures and deep valleys of life, until we come, with all who have gone before us, to dwell for ever in your presence.

Good Shepherd, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

...And now, let us join with the Christians of all nations in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples as we say

***Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.***

***And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever, Amen.***

OFFERING

Generous God, you lead us by the still waters and furnish a table overflowing with all we need. May you take these gifts, bless them, multiply them and use them that they might make a difference in the lives of others, Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of the Lord be with you
And also with you

Loving Shepherd, we pray for your church and for all who follow you.

We pray for the leaders of churches:

For those who are pastors to your people;

For all who serve you in places of loneliness and hardship.

Help us to work for the time when all your followers will be able to eat together at the table you prepare for us, and together proclaim your love to the world.

Good Shepherd, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Loving Shepherd, we pray for all those you entrust to our care.

We pray for our families and our friends,

For those who must depend on others for their welfare,

For those with constant responsibility of care for others.

Help us to make community where all are known by name, where all know the experience of being accepted and valued as individuals.

Good Shepherd, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Loving Shepherd, we pray for all in need of your comfort and balm. We think especially of those who are affected by the lockdowns associated with Covid 19. For those who are on the frontline, and those who support them, and for the millions of people whose lives are on hold as we wait.

We pray for all who are lost, lonely or confused:

For the sick and the dying,

For all who provide medical care, for social workers and pastoral care workers.

Help us to bring consolation to all who suffer, and the assurance that in sorrow and in pain you will not abandon them.

Good Shepherd, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

SONG TiS 132 Holy holy holy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwuDSw-9cUQ>

Words and music

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,
early in the morning our praise shall be;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore you,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before you,
God everlasting through eternity.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide you,
through the sinful human eye your glory may not see,
you alone are holy, there is none beside you
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,
all thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and
sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

*Words Reginald Heber/Music John B Dykes Song no 1156 Public Domain
.C.L.I. No. 237097*

PRAYER

As we sit once again in a room in our houses, we come to you O God who is not confined by walls, or time itself.

You are greater than we. You are greater than each one of us- no matter how much we try to rule our own lives- we fall before you knowing how great you are.

At night we see the stars in the sky and know that you are greater than all of them.

During the day we see people walking along the street, people staying in their homes, and people going to and from their work. We know that no matter where we go and no matter what we do - you are herewith each one of us.

You see us, know us and love us.

Like a shepherd who knows the calls of thee sheep we can have confidence in praying to you. Yet we need to learn more of your voice so we can be confident in knowing when you are calling to us.

We worship and adore you, most loving God, for who you are, for all that you have done and most especially, for letting us know you through Jesus Christ our Lord, and in the presence of your Spirit.

***Merciful God, our Maker and our Judge,
We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed:
We have not loved you with our whole heart,
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
We repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Loving Father who mothers us, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9]
Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:
Your sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

CREED I BELIEVE I NEED A SHEPHERD (Bruce Prewer)

I believe I need a shepherd.
Because I am sometimes timid and other times overconfident,
because I often don't know the best path yet pretend I do,
because I rush into dead ends or lead others into hazardous places,
because my brightest ideas are seamed with darkness,
because the things I crave may not be what is good for me,
I need a shepherd.

I believe in Jesus, the best possible shepherd;
his wisdom leads me to the optimum opportunities,
his word comforts me when I'm anxious or afraid,
his arm steadies me when I feel weary and heavy-laden,
his wounded body displays the cost of my rescue,
I believe in Jesus, the best possible shepherd.

I believe that I do not find him but he finds me,
that I under his care by virtue of sheer grace,
the love he gives me is to be shared with others,
that he treasures my name and prepares a place for me,
that his fold transfixes earth and heaven.
I trust Jesus, the good shepherd.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Loving Shepherd, we pray for your people of every land.

We pray for those in countries torn by war and conflict:
For those who continue to suffer the effects of past wars;
For all aid and relief workers.
Do not let us forget those of this and other lands who have paid
with their lives the shocking cost of war, and strengthen us, that
we may be ready to make the sacrifices required for peace.
Good Shepherd, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

SONG

TiS 597 Master Speak Thy Servant Heareth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miWHJKLnh7Y>

Words and music

Master, speak, thy servant heareth,
waiting for thy gracious word,
Longing for thy voice that cheereth;
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for thee:
what hast thou to say to me?

Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
with a step more firm and free,
where the shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the rock.

Master, speak: and make me ready,
When thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for thee:
Master, speak, O speak to me!

LicenSing No. 604575 / C.C.L.I. No. 237097

STORY A story of protection



During World War II, a US Marine was separated from his unit on a Pacific island. The fighting had been intense, and in the smoke and the crossfire, he had lost touch with his comrades.

Alone in the jungle, he could hear enemy soldiers coming in his direction. Scrambling for cover, he found his way up a high ridge to several small caves in the rock. Quickly he crawled inside one of the caves. Although safe for the moment, he realized that once the enemy soldiers looking for him swept up the ridge, they would quickly search all the caves and he would be killed. As he waited, he prayed, "Lord, if it be your will, please protect me. Whatever your will though, I love you and trust you. Amen."

After praying, he lay quietly listening to the enemy begin to draw close. He thought, "Well, I guess the Lord isn't going to help me out of this one."

Just then he saw a spider begin to build a web over the front of his cave. As he watched, listening to the enemy searching for him all the while, the spider layered strand after strand of web across the opening of the cave.

"Hah" he thought, "what I need is a brick wall and what the Lord has sent me is a spider web. God does have a sense of humour."

As the enemy drew closer, he watched from the darkness of his hideout and could see them searching one cave after another. As they came to his, he got ready to make his last stand. To his amazement, however, after glancing in the direction of his cave, they moved on.

Suddenly, he realized that with the spider web over the entrance, his cave looked as if no one had entered it for quite a while.

"Lord, forgive me," prayed the young man, "I had forgotten that in you a spider's web is stronger than a brick wall."

SONG **Be Strong and Courageous**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZaYpMWpRg>
and music

Words

*Be strong and courageous
The Lord of the Ages
Holds all His little ones
Safe by His side.
Be strong and courageous
The Lord of the Ages
Holds all His little ones safe.*

Do not fear the fire
Do not fear the waters
Do not fear the thunder
Jesus has conquered them all
Be strong and courageous...

Do not fear the darkness (Do not fear the darkness)
Do not fear the sadness (Do not fear the sadness)
Do not fear the sickness (Do not fear the sickness)
Jesus has conquered them all
Be strong and courageous...

Do not fear the enemy (Do not fear the enemy)
Do not fear the poverty (Do not fear the poverty)
Do not fear eternity (Do not fear eternity)
Jesus has conquered them all

*Be strong and courageous
The Lord of the Ages
Holds all His little ones
Safe by His side.
Be strong and courageous
The Lord of the Ages
Holds all His little ones safe.*

Words and Music Colin Buchanan Used with permission

READINGS

Acts 2: 42-47

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day 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, ⁴⁷praising 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

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. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

This is the word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God

SERMON