



Sunday 25th April 2021

Dear friends,

If you have the Internet, you will find a video to accompany this sheet on YouTube from Sunday morning – search for Isle of Man Methodist Church and you will find it on our YouTube channel.

Our prayers are with you all,

Isle of Man Methodist Staff Team

Opening Prayer

God of Peace, we rejoice that by your Holy Spirit you raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead to be the great Shepherd. By that same Spirit, grant that we may be led by him out darkness and death into the fullness of life eternal.

We ask this in Jesus' name, and for your Glory.

Amen.

Hymn: StF 350 - I Cannot Tell

Sing/ Read /pray / the words below

I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
should set his love upon us, now or then,
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,

to bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three-and-thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy-laden,
for yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.

I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun shall shine in splendour,
when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when at his bidding every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when every human heart with love is filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
and myriad, myriad human voices sing,
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will
answer:
'at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'

William Young Fullerton (1857-1932)
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number 350
CCLI 2421471

Today's Readings:

Ps 23
John 10:11-18

Find a Bible and read today's passages. If you do not have a Bible at home, ask your local minister who will gladly source one for you.

A time of reflection

If you could describe yourself as any animal at all, what would it be?

Why are we so often referred to as 'sheep' in Scripture? What character traits do you associate with sheep?

Nervous, flighty creatures...milling around...needing to be herded by trained dogs...hardly two brain cells to call their own...??

We have to remember that the relationship between sheep and shepherd in the time and culture of scripture is very different to today's farming methods!

Throughout the Old Testament, a familiar role of God is that of a shepherd - it is first found in Genesis 49:24 where He describes Himself as "the Mighty One of Jacob . . . the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel".

The prophet Isaiah in his great passage on comfort sees the LORD God "Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs, And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes"

Jeremiah cried out "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock"

15 times in Ezekiel Ch 34 the Lord says "my flock", or "my sheep" - and throughout the passage we find a searching shepherd, seeking the lost, binding the broken, strengthening the sick.

No doubt Jesus had this passage and other Old Testament shepherd imagery in mind when He said, "I

am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep”

We are so familiar with this imagery and concept today that we can sometimes be in danger of losing sight of the incredible richness of these statements.

Often when God is referred to as a shepherd in scripture it is set against a backdrop of ‘evil shepherds’ in society - selfish kings, greedy rulers, cruel bosses, false prophets. Jesus contrasts his love and care for the flock against the ‘hired hands’ who do not care, but instead run away when trouble comes.

In Christ we have a Good Shepherd who has already faced all dangers and threats - for us. Who has already shown His love so strong that He was obedient even to death on a cross - for us. Who today wants to care for and show His great love to all who would come to Him - and to us.

Who do you put your trust in? Who play the roles of shepherd in our lives and society? Pray for them. And commit yourself fully to trusting in Christ first and foremost as you too are counted as one of the Saviour’s flock and can truly say “The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want”.

Hymn: StF 481 - The Lord’s my Shepherd

Sing/ Read /pray / the words below:

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup -- it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path --
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

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number 481

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Prayers of Intercession

Father, we give you thanks for the risen Lord, the Good Shepherd, who seeks out and saves all who are lost.

We pray for all who are walking in the valley of the shadow at this time,
all whose lives are hard and filled with pain.
May they know your love and protection.

We pray for all who are called to share in the shepherding of your people, ministers and lay workers, paid and volunteers.

Lord of hosts,
You are our strength and shield.

We ask you to guide all cares and counsellors,
we pray for all who are looking after others,
we pray for all who are there to care for those who are at their lowest, especially those working in mental health and care services.

Lord of hosts,
You are our strength and shield.

We remember all who have protected and guided us.
We pray for those who have supported us in times of darkness.

We pray for our homes and our loved ones.

Lord of hosts,
You are our strength and shield.

We come with all who have entered into weakness, darkness, or trouble this week.

We pray for those who cannot pray for themselves, Lord, may we all learn to abide in you, and know that you abide in us.

May we know that nothing separates us from you and not even death can defeat your matchless love.

Lord of hosts,
You are our strength and shield.
Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

A prayer of blessing

The Mighty Father protect and enfold you.
The Good Shepherd guide and revive you.
The Holy Spirit strengthen you and abide in you.
And the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and always.
Amen.



original materials by Rev Steve Ingrouille,
Some prayers adapted from David Adams “Glimpse of Glory”
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