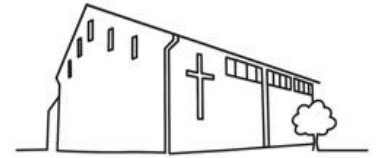


THE WEEKLY LINK



St Wulstans Church

Sunday 26th April

10am Communion — Rev Andy at St Barnabas

11.15 Communion — Rev Sarah at St Wulstans

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.

TODAY'S MUSIC

I heard the voice of Jesus 231

Ubi caritas 525

The King of Love 148

Wed 29 April 10am Midweek Communion — Rev Rosie at St Barnabas

Wed 29 April 7pm Easter ABIDE group at the Vicarage

Fri 1 May 10.30 Easter ABIDE group at the Vicarage

Fri 1 May 2pm Year 11 Leavers' service in Bishop Perowne School

Sunday 3rd May

10am Communion — Rev Sarah at St Barnabas

11.15 Communion — Rev Nick at St Wulstans

Acts 2:42–47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day 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, praising 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. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

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

THIS WEEK’S INTERCESSIONS

Father to the whole family of the church, you call your people to be devoted — to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Shape your Church in our day to be a community of shared life and generous hearts.

Where we are fragmented, draw us together; where we hold back, teach us to give; where we are distracted, gather us again around your Word and your table.

We pray for the life of the world you love: for those in need of daily bread, for those who live in fear, for those who are overlooked or forgotten. Raise up communities of care and justice; give wisdom to those in authority; and stir in us a willingness to share what we have.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Christ Jesus, Good Shepherd to us all, you are the gate for the sheep, the one through whom we find life in all its fullness. We pray for all who lead your Church: grant them integrity of voice, clarity of purpose, and a deep attentiveness to you. Guard your people from false voices and from all that would lead us away from your life. Give us grace to recognise your voice and to follow where you lead.

We pray for those whose lives feel diminished or threatened: the sick, the anxious, the grieving, and the weary. Speak your voice of life into their darkness, and lead them into safe pastures.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains us all, you call us to live as your people in the world, as those set apart not by withdrawal but by the shape of our lives.

We pray for our communities, our workplaces, and our homes: that our conduct may be honourable, our words truthful, and our lives marked by compassion and humility. Where there is harm, lead us into repentance; where there is conflict, make us peacemakers; where there is suffering, make us steadfast in hope. Gentle Spirit, you bind us together in one fellowship that stretches beyond what we can see. We remember before you those who have died, and we entrust them to your keeping. Keep us faithful in the way of Christ, until we share with all your saints in the fullness of the new creation.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all evermore Amen

THE STARTING PLACE

Holiness is a word that can both attract and repel. Some people hear in it the beauty of a life close to God; others hear the weight of judgment or moral pressure. When you hear the word *holiness*, what draws you towards it, and what makes you uneasy about it?

LISTENING TO ACTS

Read [Acts 2:42–47](#). Notice all the ways in which the community practised conspicuous holiness.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

Read [John 10:1–10](#). Jesus speaks about sheep who recognise the shepherd's voice and follow him. What does this image suggest about holiness as belonging?

LISTENING TO PETER

The good Shepherd is not a gentle image but rather one of separation: those who know the shepherd's voice stand out from those who do not. As you read our next passage from Peter, below, take time to notice how holiness creates distinction, distinction creates exposure, and exposure creates accountability.

1 Peter 2:11–3:12

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honour everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honour the emperor.

Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When he was abused, he did

not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight. It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you. Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honour to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life—so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

Finally, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For 'Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'

THE THRESHOLD

Think about the places where your life is most visible — work, home, friendships, community. Where might your faith already be speaking for itself, for better or for worse?

MOVING FORWARD

This spring, what might you nurture, and what might you prune back, so that your life bears clearer witness to Good Shepherd you follow?

A Prayer for this Week

Good Shepherd, give us courage to live lives that cannot be hidden; that all we do may bear faithful witness to you. Amen.

There are ABIDE groups this week at the Vicarage

WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL AT 7PM and **FRIDAY 1ST MAY AT 10.30AM**