The Methodist Church
Ministries: Vocations & Worship

Sunday 3rd May 2020

Opening Prayer

Jesus said: 'I am the Good Shepherd'. Lord, help me to listen for his voice offering comfort and safety.

Hymn: I heard the voice of Jesus say (Singing the Faith 248
Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqF4N7rdV-w

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Come unto me and rest;

lay down, O weary one, lay down
your head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,

weary and worn and sad,
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:

'Behold, I freely give
the living water;thirsty one,
stoop down and drink and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'I am this dark world's Light;

look unto me, your morn shall rise,
and all your day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk,
till travelling days are done.

Horatius N. Bonar (1808-1889)

Let us pray together

Glory to God, creator of heaven and earth, who has made all things living.
Glory to God, Father of all mercies, who has given his only-begotten son to be our Redeemer.
Glory to God, fire of holy love, who for our sanctification has poured forth his life-giving Spirit.
John Hamilton (1512-1571) from Prayer Handbook 2019-2020 Day 3

Today's Reading from the Old Testament -

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
    He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
    he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
    for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
    I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
    your rod and your staff—
    they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
    in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
    my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
    all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
    my whole life long.

Today's Gospel Reading: 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.

Time to Reflect

Those who first listened to Jesus would have had two different pictures of sheep-folds in their minds. The first would have been the communal sheepfold in the village — a solid structure with a strong gate and a gatekeeper.

Several flocks would be kept together over night. The gatekeeper would only allow entrance to a shepherd who was known to him, whose voice was familiar to himself and at least some of the sheep.

The other picture would be of the sheepfold used when the flocks were too far from the village to come back for the night — an open enclosure with no gate, just an opening, often made of rough stones with a layer of thorn brush along the top. At night, after the sheep were in, the shepherd would lie down in the doorway. He became the gate. There was no legitimate access to the sheepfold except through him. In our reading from John's Gospel Jesus referred to both these images. He refers to the true shepherd entering by the door, past the gatekeeper; and he refers to himself as the gate, the one who lays himself down that the sheep may be kept safely until the day comes and they can safely graze.

Gates come in many shapes and kinds. Sometimes they exclude to keep the group safe, and sometimes they admit, depending on issues of need and trust. Lately we've had to exclude people from our homes for our own safety. All of us have had to become our own 'gatekeepers', deciding what level of risk is acceptable, after checking the advice being given and weighing up who and what we feel we can trust. Jesus lays himself down, risking all, that we may come and go freely, enjoying abundant life in company with Him.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Let us pray for our world in crisis, a crisis that has brought out the best and the worst in humanity:

We give thanks for those who are offering help in so many ways to those in need;
and pray for those who in their fear acted less generously.

We give thanks for all the 'key workers' who have worked tirelessly in medical and care sectors; Local Authority and community teams; production and distribution;
and pray for those now idle, anxious, and depressed due to the closures.

We give thanks for positive voices, encouraging and nurturing others in so many ways;
and pray for those whose voices bring 'fake' advice and false testimony.

Good Shepherd of the sheep, by whom the lost are sought and guided into the fold:
feed us and we shall be satisfied;
heal us and we shall be made whole'
and lead us, that we may be with you;

for you are alive and reign,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
 Amen;
     Collect for Fourth Sunday of Easter
       from Methodist Worship book.

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father ……

Hymn: Listen to 'You are my keeper'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FGQLbGiUpQ

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

I come into your sheep-fold this day, to find the rest I need. When the new day comes, I will follow you through green pastures and beside still waters. May your goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life. Amen.

  Original Materials by Pamela Cram

Just for Fun!

Wordsearch clues & answers

This month the Church celebrates the Ascension of Jesus, the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the fact that our God is a Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. After the Resurrection, Jesus was seen on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He encouraged his disciples, and said that He was sending them to all corners of the earth, as his witnesses. 40 days after Easter, Jesus ascended into heaven; his work on earth was done. The disciples returned to Jerusalem, and on the fateful morning of Pentecost, there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues – to the astonishment of those who heard them. That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell all those who believed in Jesus: the Church was born. And so we have a triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Ascension	Prayer	Tongues	Confusion	Spirit
Blessed	Power	Flame	Languages	Trinity
Taken	One	Joy	Earth	Father
Jerusalem	Room	Praise	Peter	Son
Wait	Disciples		Holy	triune

```
G E N N T F N E L W E E A
I A F L A M E C M O O R R
L E T N K R R E Y A R P S
R N D O E Y L O H E T E T
I O E I N A H M T R R T I
T I Y S S G O T I P I Y S
E S O U P C U N R R U S B
S N R F W R I E I A N L T
T E R N A T N P S I E N P
J C J O Y T S O L S O E K
T S K C S I H W S E T L O
L A N G U A G E S E S I T
R T E W B W D R R O P F L
```