**Morning Praise @ Home 30th April 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Acts 2: 42 – 47 John 10: 1 - 10

**Reflection from Ruth**

One of my children’s favourite films when they were young was called Babe. It’s the story of a piglet who gets separated from his family and ends up in the hands of a farmer. The farmer gives Babe to the sheepdogs to raise, so Babe grows up thinking he’s a sheep pig. Babe starts training with the other sheepdogs, and he has a lot to learn. From herding sheep to barking like a dog, Babe has his work cut out for him. But with the help of his new friends and a little bit of luck, he starts to make progress. Soon, Babe is the talk of the farm, and everyone is rooting for him to succeed. But the real test comes when the farmer enters Babe into a sheepdog competition. The sheep just won’t do what he says – they keep running off in the wrong direction, or all in different directions. Poor Babe and his shepherd are about to become a laughing stock, but one of his friends runs to ask the sheep on his farm what to do – and they give him a secret password. The password was.... "Baa-ram-ewe"! When Babe spoke the language of the sheep and used their own sounds to command them it worked!

In our reading today we have the familiar term of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. This description of Jesus highlights his role as a protector and provider for his followers. In ancient times, shepherds were responsible for guiding their flocks to safety, providing them with food and water, and defending them from predators. Jesus is seen as fulfilling this same role for his followers.

Jesus’ statement that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep also has deep meaning. Christians believe that Jesus willingly sacrificed himself on the cross for the sake of humanity, offering himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. This act of love and selflessness demonstrates Jesus’ devotion to his followers and his willingness to go to great lengths to ensure their spiritual well-being.

So for us – this serves as a comforting reminder of Jesus’ presence in our lives and the extent of his love for us. However, it also means that we are his flock. We may go in the wrong direction, we may go in different directions, but Jesus is there to guide us and protect us. But like the sheep in the film, we have to follow the right shepherd. It is very easy to go down the wrong path by listening to the wrong voices – we must learn to recognise Jesus’ voice and follow only him. There is another aspect to this – in the parable of the lost sheep Jesus says ‘*Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.’* Which means that Jesus wants the flock to grow, he searches for the lost to bring them under his protection. At the time, the Pharisees didn’t see sinners as worthy of God’s love – Jesus is saying, ALL are worthy. What does that mean for us? It means that Jesus wants our flock to grow…….and as we are Jesus’ hands and feet on this earth, it is our job to go find them. And they may not be quite like us, in a flock there are many different sheep, old ones, younger ones, lambs, white sheep, black sheep. All are wanted, all are welcome. And when we do find them, and they come into the sheepfold, let US rejoice as God does.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

Come, Lord, and give peace to your world. Disperse the clouds of war and violence, of calamity and disaster. Let your power and your glory be revealed to the nations.

Lord in you mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who watch and wait while we sleep: for police, hospital workers, and ambulance workers, for fire fighters and for all who work in the dark hours of the night.

Come into our work places that they may reflect your glory, that we may rejoice in each other’s presence, that we may be fully aware of others and sensitive to their needs.

Lord in you mercy **Hear our prayer**

Come, Lord, to all who are unable to cope at this time, to all who are weighed down with troubles, to all those in hospital and in nursing homes.

Comfort and support them and be with their friends and families as they attempt to offer support too.

Lord in you mercy **Hear our prayer**

From our prayer diary today we think of all those who have recently lost family or friends. Comfort them in their grief and give them your strength every day. Pray that our ministry to bereaved people may be strengthened and that as well as leading funerals well John may help those who have lost loved ones to work through their grief.

Lord in you mercy **Hear our prayer**

We thank you Father for our church. For all those who play their part in ensuring a continuing presence in our communities in Burton, Puddington and Shotwick. We thank you for our Vicar John, for our lay readers and all those who help to look after these beautiful buildings and manage the churchyard. We thank you for all those who help with organising events for the elderly and the young, events for young families and caring for the sick.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**