

Notices

Good Morning & welcome to Tyndale on this last Sunday of April, where is the year going? Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look forward to hearing God's message through his preaching..

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00am with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

On Wednesday evening at 7.30, again on Zoom, there will be a discussion led by Michael entitled 'Post lockdown new normal' when we will be looking at the impact on society that the pandemic and the lockdowns have had on people. Please join us if you are free.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place as part of our May church meeting at which we will be holding an election for the office of Church Secretary. Nominations need to be submitted to the Church Treasurer today and, once again, the election will utilize both online and postal balloting.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister.

Thank you.

Welcome

Welcome once again to Tyndale Baptist Church's morning worship, whether you're in the church or 'on-line' – we hope you will feel the warmth of the welcome as we continue to worship during the joyful season of Easter – in this period which is the 'new normal'.

Of course we hope, with everyone else, to be able to experience more freedoms in the coming weeks – and particularly we hope that we can resume some kind of congregational singing. How we have missed singing; we have been richly blessed by watching and hearing so many on-line choirs, not least our own 'Virtual Singers', but often those involved have said how difficult it is singing on their own and how much they *long* to sing again with others. *We all do; but we are glad and grateful to Rachel and Eileen who, this morning, will be playing and singing; hopefully the 'first fruits' of what, hopefully before too long, we will all be able to enjoy – as part of what we do in worship.*

Necessarily in this period worship has been 'narrowed down' – mostly to sitting and listening, but worship involves our whole selves *together*, and we crave to be able to use our voices *together* – 'make a joyful noise unto the Lord' as the Bible says.

Still, if for a time we can only use our minds and our voices are no more than whispers behind our masks; we *have* used our bodies in moving to this service..and we *are* using our whole selves as we bend our will to this duty and joy in the joyful season of Easter.

'Sing, my soul, when hope is sleeping'

Performed by Rachel Molyneux and Eileen Pratt

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in heart & spirit, mind & body, to join in the glad duty & joy of worship; we gather in weakness and frailty; we anticipate the promised presence of God; we come at his call and with seeking, expectant hearts, we worship in the name of Jesus

BPW 242 ['At the dawning of salvation'](#)

St Andrew's Virtual Choir, Owen Sound, Ontario Canada, dir. Matthew Allard

BPW702 Responsive reading – Psalm 136

Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good; his love is eternal.

Give thanks to the greatest of all gods; his love is eternal

Give thanks to the mightiest of all lords; his love is eternal.

He alone performs great miracles; his love is eternal.

By his wisdom he made the heavens; his love is eternal.

He built the earth on the deep waters; his love is eternal.

He made the sun and the moon; his love is eternal.

The sun to rule the day; his love is eternal.

The moon and the stars to rule over the night; his love is eternal.

He freed us from our enemies; his love is eternal.

Give thanks to the God of heavens; his love is eternal.

Opening Prayer

Lord God we ask you to meet us today as we are, but first we acknowledge you for who you are, God of mercy and grace, whose life overflows into every process, place & probability in the universe, whose spirit blows through every life, living thing & location in the universe & whose love goes where no earthly love goes to save the lost, to heal the sorrowful & to overcome everything that makes for death in the universe - We come before you in Christ's name; he has shown us more of your love than we had any right to see & he has brought us the living reality of your mercy & grace -

We ask you to forgive us, because of what Christ has done for us; we know we have sinned; our regrets are sincere but our failures are real & our best efforts are inadequate. Lord in sorrow we wait on your mercy once more; touch us & restore us with your holy love –

Listen, says Jesus, I stand at the door and knock, if any who hear my voice and open the door I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.

Now, Lord, with thankful hearts, we ask you to help us as we worship – make us true to what we have claimed to be, and make our worship true to what you have called us to be, as we offer you the best of our hearts and lives, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

['All heaven declares'](#)

Noel and Tricia Richards/ Keswick Praise

Readings

[Genesis 9.8-13](#)

BPW 200 ['God has given us a book full of stories'](#)

[John 10:11-18](#)

Sermon

Lord, we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your spirit, and may what is decided lead us all on towards your Kingdom..Amen

We seem to be surrounded at the moment with images and incidents that portray what happens when *shepherds are not good*.

When Derek Chauvin knelt for over 9 mins on George Floyd's neck what we were watching, I think, was *shepherds that were not good*.

When Alexey Navalny teeters on the edge of death what we are watching, I think, are *shepherds that are not good*.

When those 6 major English Premier League football clubs – announced their intention of joining the European Super League (before it all collapsed) what we were watching, I think, was *shepherds that were not good*.

When, over and over we hear talk of cronyism, chumocracy, lobbying, lack of accountability, questions about integrity, what we are watching, I think, are *shepherds that are not good*.

When we have seen, in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, China, news reports of government forces dropping bombs, populations living in fear, people detained and mistreated, what we were watching, I think, was *shepherds that were not good*.

Look, this isn't a tirade against every political thing I don't agree with (that list would be much longer...): it's not a leftie love-in..

Still, there's a spirit in the air, don't you think – a spirit of impunity, of lack-of-accountability -

let me quote that icon of the times, S't Ted Hastings of Line of Duty – the long-running BBC series about an anti-corruption unit. 'when did we stop caring about honesty & integrity?'

Come to think of it, I wonder if the popularity of the series – far-fetched as it no doubt is, isn't precisely because of that spirit – of impunity, unaccountability –

If only there really was an AC 12 with its flawed but sincere officers committed to honesty and integrity, rooting out wrong-doing – rooting out, if you like, *shepherds who are not good*

I think this is what Eastertide will have to come to, if we're going to talk about a new world after Easter, about risen life, an end to death. It won't be enough just to talk about the interior life, about meeting Jesus, about Emmaus Roads and gardens and empty tombs

We have to talk as well about impunity, accountability, integrity – about *shepherds who are not good* – because we can't help talking about the Good Shepherd

We could talk about rainbows but we did a few weeks ago, at the start of Lent, remember – *a new sign in the creation - Christ the One who came as a sign that God has not forgotten.*

I talked then about the rainbow as God's 'never again' sign standing over us all at the beginning of Lent as we set out to follow the hard road –

Well here we are, all these weeks later – and probably, rightly, the rainbow belongs now; the end-of-the-flood story as a clear connecting point with Easter..

But what about the Good Shepherd? One of the great titles of Jesus in John's gospel; from way back in the pre-Easter story, right in the middle of his ministry, as opposition builds.

Well it belongs here, post-Easter as well. The opposition to Jesus came from the religious establishment of the day, but in a time when religious and state affairs were closely intertwined really the opposition to Jesus was '*shepherds who were not good*'

The idea of '*shepherds who are not good*' as a way of talking about that spirit we pointed to – the spirit of impunity, non-accountability, lack-of-integrity

Let's not get bogged down with religion, as if all Jesus was trying to promote was some reformed version of the Jewish faith. He is often seen as a religious reformer, isn't he?

Overturning the tables in the temple; picking ears of corn on the Sabbath while Pharisees skulked in the bushes, presumably, watching for any misdemeanour...etc, etc..

And the Christian church is often seen as beginning as a reform movement within Judaism, before breaking away completely.

The history of the Christian church itself is littered with reform movements of one kind or another – Baptists have reform in their DNA, as do Methodists; as do Christians in the House Church movement or the so-called 'Restorationist' movement –

& it's tempting, especially when you look at all the pomp & ceremony of the C of E (D of E's funeral) or hear about its institutional racism, to think; this all needs reforming..

As if a renewed, reformed church would be enough to convince everyone that Jesus is risen.

Well I don't think that's enough at all; not enough to ring with the joyful message and spirit of Easter; I don't think it's true to the Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The Good Shepherd knows his own and his own know him; the Good Shepherd has other sheep that he must bring also, and they listen to his voice.

The Good Shepherd does not make people say '*I can't breathe*'; the Good Shepherd does not let people come close to death in prison (or disappear - whatever happened to Nazanin Zagari-Radliffe and many others?); the Good Shepherd does not let money talk, does not run from accountability; does not mistreat whole populations, does not bomb to instil fear –

these things happen when *the shepherds are not good* - when the spirit of the age is a spirit of unaccountability, when there is an absence of integrity.

The language of the Good Shepherd is a language of peace, care, binding up wounds, seeking out the lost; of laying down one's life – such language *promotes* a spirit of accountability and integrity,

Because it's the language that speaks the joyful message of Easter to the whole world.. freedom & new life, forgiveness.. & it's rich with the images of sheep safely grazing & going in & out & finding good pasture, of other sheep 'not of this fold' finding welcome

& after Easter it's a language for the whole world to use, so that folk might breathe & find freedom from captivity & relief from the greed of others & fairness in every institution & good government that promotes the welfare of all people & – as God says in the story of Noah

'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me & all flesh...'

*This is the sign; the rainbow is the sign; the risen Jesus is the sign; the Good Shepherd is the sign – the Church could be the sign if it's people would always act with integrity and accountability, but they don't always – thank goodness for God's forgiveness – but really, in the joyful season of Eastertide we should be looking to see signs in every country and government, and institution and enterprise and police force and international relationship – Signs of God's Kingdom indeed, *in the whole world*, because of the joyful message of Easter..*

Offering prayer & the grace

Lord we come before you, as sheep of the Good Shepherd; thankful that you bind our wounds, welcome us in & let us go in & out to find good pasture and seek us out when we are lost; & with thankful hearts we give of ourselves in these & all our gifts – & commit, once again, to live and serve and look for every sign of your peaceable, everlasting Kingdom

The grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

BPW199 ['In a Byre Near Bethlehem'](#)

Zac Hicks + Cherry Creek Worship

Prayers

We pray for the people of the world; desperately clinging to leaky boats; maundering in refugee camps; scratching out a living in the rubble of their communities while still bombs fall; doing their best against the insecurities and dis-eases of this pandemic; where in many places it must be said 'they are like sheep without a shepherd'

We remain in silence..

Lord whose Son is the Good Shepherd **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those with power in the world; in governments, businesses, institutions, where corruption and greed find footholds and a spirit of unaccountability and lack-of-integrity spreads abroad; so that in many places it must be said 'the shepherds are not good'

We remain in silence

Lord whose Son is the Good Shepherd **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those without power in the world, who are often caught up in networks of injustice and fall victim to institutional racism and casual prejudice; so that in many places it must be said, 'they are lost and their wounds need binding'

Lord whose Son is the Good Shepherd **Hear our prayer**

We pray that we who believe in the Good Shepherd in the world will become more like him and live out signs of the joyful message of Easter; so that in many places it will be said; 'look! Signs of abundant life!'

We remain in silence

Lord whose Son is the Good Shepherd **Hear our prayer**

'Alleluia, Raise the Gospel'

Tyndale Virtual Singing Group

Benediction

The blessing of God almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always – amen. Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Keith and Margaret reading; Rachel sorting music, Tyndale's singers singing, virtually, and the Stewarding Team who have overseen all the practical arrangements and will clean up after everyone has left– thank you one and all for taking part.

In the continuing joyful season of Eastertide, we will continue to support and pray for one another over the coming week – until we meet again..

['Eternal Source of light divine'](#)

- G.F.Handel arr. Christian Forshaw. Performed by Grace Davison & Christian Forshaw