

**Collect and readings for  
The Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**COLLECT**

Almighty God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:  
raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the  
life of righteousness,  
that we may seek those things which are above,  
where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**READINGS**

**1st reading** from the New Testament (after the Gospels): the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2, verses 42-47

**Psalms 23** from the Old Testament (about half-way through) The Lord is my Shepherd

**2nd reading from the New Testament**, (towards the end): the first letter of Peter chapter 2, verses 19-25

**Gospel** (the 4th of the four), St John chapter 10, verses 1-10

**From Revd. Maureen**



I was particularly struck this week by the words of the reading from The Acts of the Apostles. Although we are unable to be together, have all things in common or sell our possessions and goods – we are most certainly distributing to all, as any had need! We may not spend much time in “the temple”, but we can make our homes a temple of sorts as some of us join online or in virtual worship for the breaking of bread, and eat our food with glad and generous hearts, praising God. It should surely be our continual prayer that the Lord will add to our number, day by day as we share in worship and prayer in various ways and also share friendship and concern with those around us.

We might have thought that our Gospel reading this Sunday would have featured another of Jesus’ appearances to his disciples, it being the 4th Sunday of Easter – such as what used to be called by a one-time Bishop of Horsham “the barbie on the beach”. I should explain that he was an Australian, and he was referring to a barbecue, not a Barbie doll!

*Continued...*

The Bishop was talking about the appearance of Jesus on a beach while the disciples were fishing, a story which is told later in St John’s Gospel, chapter 21 in fact. This reading is not set to be used until the 3rd Sunday of Easter in Year C.

I should perhaps explain at this point what I mean by Year C. The Church has three “cycles” of readings, spread over three years. In year A (the year in which we are now), most of the readings heard at Holy Communion services will be from St Matthew’s Gospel, with just a few readings from St John’s Gospel at strategic points; Year B will begin on Advent Sunday (the Church’s year begins on Advent Sunday, usually either on the last Sunday of November or the first Sunday in December), and Year B’s readings will focus on St Mark’s Gospel, with a sprinkling of St John now and again; and Year C, which will begin on Advent Sunday in 2021 will focus on St Luke’s Gospel, again with a few Sundays using St John.



So, to go back to our Gospel for today – and, indeed, for the next two Sundays - we return to the earlier chapters of St John’s Gospel for some of Jesus’ sayings, this week’s being about him as the gate to the sheepfold and offering safety, freedom and life to those who know his voice and follow him. And our psalm for this Sunday, Psalm 23, being that well-known and well-loved psalm. ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’ which is often chosen to be read, or sung as a hymn, at funeral services. Such reassurance of God’s continual presence in every situation and circumstance which life can throw at us – The Lord is; he makes me; he revives, and guides.

*Continued...*

Up to now, the psalmist is describing God but then, suddenly, in verse 4 the psalmist speaks directly to God as shepherd – 'you are with me; you comfort me; you spread a table; you have anointed my head. And finally, the psalm ends with almost a cry of certainty: 'Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' Let us pray that Roger Morris, having experienced God in all these ways during his lifetime, is now dwelling in God's presence for eternity. We continue to pray for his soul, and for his family and all who mourn.



So, although our Gospel wasn't quite what we were expecting – nevertheless the Psalm and the Gospel reading we are asked to read are very appropriate for these times in which we find ourselves. I'm sure that as you sit and read and reflect, you will find far more resonances than I have, according to your own personal experiences and circumstances. This is the Gospel of the Lord: praise to you, O Christ.

It's probably a bit obvious to say that, for those of us who knew Roger Morris, our hearts are full at this time with thanks for his life and memories of the past when he played a huge part in the life of the church here. Roger's cremation, which was his wish, was on Friday 1st May at 10.30am at Taunton Crematorium, but only close family members could be present in the current lock-down circumstances. It is intended that there will be a service of thanksgiving at some point in the future, when restrictions have been lifted.



Jesus as the Good Shepherd from the early Christian catacomb of Domitilla/Domitilla (Crypt of Lucina, 200-300 CE)

*Continued...*

Roger would have been very familiar with Psalm 23 I'm sure, though of course in the version to be found in the Book of Common Prayer:

**The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture; and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul: and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me: thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

Another reading often chosen at funeral services is St John chapter 14, the first 14 verses. Do find it in the Bible if you can, and read the passage. I have recently bought one of the poet Malcolm Guite's books which I didn't already possess and have found it to be an absolute gold-mine for all kinds of occasions. This is the sonnet which he wrote on this particular passage from St John and I thought it appropriate as we remember and give thanks for Roger Morris at this time but also for all those others who have lost someone whether because of the Coronavirus or through other causes:

Always there comes this parting of the ways,  
the best is wrested from us, born away,  
no one is with us always, nothing stays,  
night swallows even the most perfect day.  
Time makes a tragedy of human love,  
we cleave for ever to the one we choose  
only to find 'for ever' in the grave,  
we have just time enough to love and lose.

You know too well this trouble in our hearts,  
your heart is troubled for us, feels it too,  
you share with us in time that shears and parts  
to draw us out of time and into you.  
'I go, that you might come to where I am.'  
Your word comes home to us and brings us home.

*Maureen*

### **From Roger and Wendy Sleep**

We were both very sorry to hear that Roger (Morris) had passed away last week.

He was a good friend and a kind fellow with an astute approach to all his 'doings' – a first class Churchwarden with me (Roger) and will always be respected and remembered for his many 'gifts' as a practising Christian and active in all things. Our thoughts and prayers go with him.

*Roger and Wendy*

### **Our prayers**

Lord, you are our Shepherd and we pray that you will protect us from all danger, especially in this time of Lockdown, by keeping watch over us, guide us towards green pastures where we can be nourished by your word and lead us to pure still waters where we can be refreshed by your love.

*Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer*

Lord, you are our Shepherd and we pray for our church leaders that they too may care for and lead us by following the example of love and service you demonstrated in your earthly ministry. We especially pray today for all of our clergy who through the Internet and Social Media are keeping us in touch and sharing words of encouragement.

*Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer*

Lord, you are our Shepherd and we pray for the world that was given to us as an inheritance, on the understanding that we would care for it as shepherds care for their flocks. Teach us to look after our beautiful planet and care for it wisely, whilst sharing its gifts more fairly and working together with all of its inhabitants to ease its sufferings.

*Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer*

Lord, you are our Shepherd and we pray for our families and friends who need to hear the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd; who knows every one of them by name; who offers rest to the weary and salvation to sinners and life eternal to all who accept him into their lives.

*Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer*

Lord, you are our Shepherd who seeks out the lost and the sick. We pray for those we know who are lost in illness and ask you to reassure them with the knowledge that you are watching over them in their suffering and that many are praying for their recovery.

We remember especially those in the benefice who are unwell:

**John, Gwen, Joan, Bobby, Lucinda, Norma, Marissa, Roger and Wendy and for all others known to us.**

*Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer*

*Continued...*

Lord, you are our Shepherd so we pray for those who have died and for those who ache with sorrow in their loss of a loved one. We especially remember our brother in Christ, Roger Morris. May he find rest in the Spirit's embrace, safe in your keeping for ever.

*Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer.*

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we offer our prayers now for all people and their situations. In our cycle of prayer this week we pray for the parish of Combe Florey, its Churchwarden and PCC members; members of the Bishops Lydeard Church Centre Committee; contributors, distributors and readers of Fiveways magazine, and Derek Cockell its editor, and the Farming Community Network in Somerset.

We pray for all those who have had to either cancel or postpone their weddings. We know that this has been a very tough decision for them and we hold them, their families and their friends in prayer:

**Jon and Jemma, Callum and Molly; Natalie and Tom; Mike and Kerry; Lloyd and Mollie; Matthew and Amy**

all of whose Banns were to be called during this time.

We pray too for Shannon and Leigh, whose daughter Keira was to be baptised in April. We pray for them, and for Keira's godparents and look forward to welcoming them at a Baptism service at a later date.

We continue to pray for our new Rector Mark and his wife Barbara, still living in Kent but preparing for their move to us here.

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again. Keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**



## From Kath Halkyard



Thanks for the latest publication, what a treat for us all. I keep mine for Sunday reading.

During this time we are hearing of wonderful people doing wonderful things throughout the nation. Also, of great sadness. As well as reconnecting with friends in ways we could not have done a few years ago, there are also goodbyes.

I know that many people will have Roger Morris in mind, especially on the day of his funeral, and I very recently found a reading in a little book published in 1904, it so made me think of him and I would like to share it for "the Admiral", written by Irish Churchman Stopford Brooke as follows.

**Go forth believing in a Shepherd of your soul. Then faith in Him will support you in duty, and duty firmly done will strengthen faith; till at last, when all is over here, and the noise and strife of this earthly battle fades upon your dying ear, and you hear instead thereof, the deep and musical sound of the ocean of eternity, and see the lights of Heaven shining on its waters still and fair in their radiant rest, your faith will raise the song of conquest and in its forward glance upon the life to come, take up the poetic inspiration of the Hebrew King, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever".**

Thanks again for all your hard work, and take the best care you can!

See you on the far side of the virus.

*Kath*

## Maureen recommends...



This sermon from Malcolm Guite, taken from a recent service of Evening Prayer, is on The Lord's Prayer.

It tallies somewhat with what I was writing about last week - thinking about what we are saying and not just speaking on autopilot.

Malcolm's going through the Lord's Prayer each week for the next seven weeks, and talking about each section and I think it might be really helpful to think carefully about something which is so very familiar.

Please click the link to hear Malcolm's sermon.

<https://malcolmguite.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/our-father-sermon.m4a>

## From Katherine Lyddon

Dear Friends,

This comes with love and affection. I miss seeing you face to face.



I wanted to let you know that The national Church of England have just launched a 24/7 telephone line

giving everyone the opportunity to listen to prayers and services whenever they would like to.

You may enjoy it yourself, but I particularly request you phone up those you know without computers, and give them the number. I don't know many people in our church and so I do ask this gets out to as many isolated older people as possible. Thanks.

Daily Hope phonenumber to address issues of social isolation launched on Sunday

Details on the Diocesan website and on the national site at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/daily-hope-phone-line>

This is a free national phonenumber aimed particularly at the over 75s who don't have access to the internet. Research indicates that some three million people – particularly those in this age group have no, or very irregular, access to the internet. The line will be available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044.

It is a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed. Callers will hear a special greeting from the Archbishop of Canterbury before being able to choose from a range of options, including Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England's weekly national online service.

A section called Hymn Line will also offer callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled 'Hymns We Love', provides a hymn and reflection and is based on an initiative by Connections, a group focused on this age group.

Setup costs and funding for the first 2.2 million minutes of calls has been gifted to us from various charitable organisations. At present, there is clearly a challenge in informing those that are digitally-disconnected of this phone line. As such, promotion of the phonenumber is in two strands: via the media, and encouraging local churches to identify and inform those for whom this service would be valuable.

*Katherine Lyddon*

Children and Families Rural Pioneer

In Tone Deanery

07974 528880

**From Gavin and Maureen Lord**

Hello everyone

Our multi talented retired vicar in Essex (Canon Chris Bishop) has been writing and performing songs about our current problems in collaboration with his brother in law who was director of music at Brentwood School. We thought you might be interested in his first offering as a taster. The link is below. There are now four more! Chris is playing a concert ukulele.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Oi8Gs-i0eF1zPV2QIsuuZjq76qsckF6i/view>



Best wishes

*Gavin & Maureen*

**Editorial note: this is brilliant! More songs to follow in future weeks.**

**At my Grandmother's knee...  
From Penny Gale**



'Every cloud has a silver lining'.

'It's always darkest before the storm'.

'Always look towards the sun'.

And some **Heartlifters for Oldies.**

'You know you're old, when you bend down to tie your shoelaces and start wondering what else you could do while you're down there'.

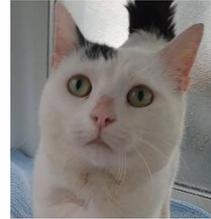


'Progress was OK when I was young, but now it's gone on for too long!'

*To be continued...*

**Spike's column**

Hello my friends!



How are you all doing? I hope you are keeping well and are cheerful during this period of lockdown.

I'm back with some more suggestions for useful things that you can do with your time. The main thing is not to become isolated so I do recommend that those of you with computers keep up to date with your emails and social media.



But don't forget that not everyone is IT savvy like me and they will enjoy receiving a letter from you.



I have been encouraging Mr and Mrs Human to go through their bedroom drawers and have a good tidy up.

And while they are at it I've made them clean all those shoes that are normally lying around in the bottom of the wardrobe that I sleep on.



I'll leave you with a reminder that the sunny weather is coming back so please, like me, do be sensible and apply sun cream if you're outside.

Sweet dreams and see you next week!

**Love from Spike xxx**



## Coping with Corona

By Penny Gale

It is so good to keep 'InTouch' -  
Because, during 'lockdown', there is so much-  
We can share, in thought and deed  
To keep spirits uplifted – as we read.

This Corona Virus seems here to stay,  
Until the Medics can find a way-  
To stop its march across our land,  
Social distancing rules still have to stand.

The continued success of this 'InTouch',  
Depends on its readership so much  
For contributions for its pages,  
This 'lockdown' still may last for ages.

So send something in, no matter how small,  
It can be anonymous, or you can 'stand tall'!  
Budding Authors are welcome, and poets unite,  
We're in this together – our Corona fight!



Tell how the Virus is affecting you?  
How are you finding enough to do?  
Share with others a hobby you've started?  
Or, if you're finding it tough, and feel downhearted?

Others will find, then, a need to respond,  
And so, through 'InTouch' they will correspond.  
The result could be one of everyone sharing  
Their 'ups and downs', in communal caring.

Boris is better, so things may change fast,  
Decisions a-plenty, more movement at last?  
Here's hoping we shall soon be able to meet  
Until then, keep 'InTouch', and each other to greet.

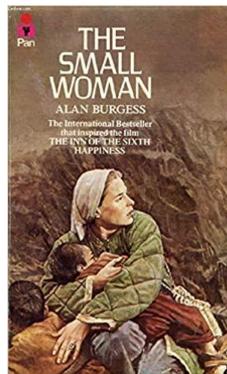
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## Book of the Week

This week I am recommending a book which is very different to what I have recommended before:

### 'The Small Woman' by Alan Burgess.



This is the story of Gladys Aylward. It may be out of print now\*, I'm not sure as my copy was printed in 1958! I first found this book when having a look through someone else's bookcase. I believe that, having read it, it set me on the path to recognising God's call to me as an ordained minister. That's quite a statement to make, but I think it's true.

A film was made of Gladys Aylward's time in China, called "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness", but the film does not do justice to her story. Something as simple as the title of the inn, in the film, is inaccurate as well – it was actually called The Inn of the Six Happinesses, so the film makers couldn't even get that right! However, that detail is immaterial to the story of Gladys being turned down initially for training as a missionary on the grounds that she had been "in service" and didn't have a degree!

She was convinced that God wanted her to go to China, and so she found a job as a maid in a London house and paid for her journey each week by whatever amount she had left over from her pay packet. The only way she could get to China was by railway across Europe, and she was turned off the Trans-Siberian railway in Siberia due to soldiers fighting in the area and she walked through a forest on her own in winter at night to get to the nearest town where she hoped to find another train or some other kind of transport to take her to where she had to go in China. The courage of that woman still inspires me.

Initially regarded as a she-devil, she befriends the town Mandarin, becomes a Foot Inspector (unbinding women and children's feet) and ends up escorting 100 Chinese children to safety across the mountains, going without any small amount of food in order that the children could have something in their tummies, and avoiding Japanese troops – but only just - and over the Yellow River taking many weeks to accomplish this. Her faith in God never wavered, as she was convinced that she was working where he wanted her to be. I'm sure there are many stories of other people who are just as inspiring, but this is the one which inspired me. If you have a DVD of The Inn of the Six Happiness do watch it if you have time (it is quite a long film), but take some of the scenes with a pinch of salt and bear in mind that a lot of detail has been omitted!

*Maureen*

\* Editor's note: the book is out of print but Amazon has several used editions in its Marketplace, starting at around £5.