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# St Michael and all Angels Church

# Cottingley

“Church without walls”

***The Good Shepherd***

Sunday Lite Service

***Welcome by John Fernley***

**Hymn** *Amazing grace*

# Time to gather

***Leader***: we usually go to church to worship god with god’s people, but today we are being church here in this place.

***Everyone***: god is with us.

*Place the cross in the middle of your gathering.*

***Everyone***: god is with us.

*Place the bible in the middle of your gathering.*

***Everyone***: god is with us.

*Light the candle and place it in the middle of your gathering.*

***Everyone***: god is with us – father, son and holy spirit.

***A time to say sorry***

**Leader**: let us think about the times we forgot we are followers of jesus. The times we were unkind or hurtful, the times we did not care for the world or other people. When we say sorry to god, god promises to forgive us.

*Sorry stones*

***You will need*** some stones, a basket, a cross

Place the stones in a basket. Say something like, ‘When we do wrong things, it can feel as though we are weighed down. Take a stone from the basket. As you weigh it in your hand, think of what is weighing you. When you are ready, place the stone by the cross.’

When everyone has placed their stone by the cross, use the words at TIME TO SAY SORRY.

***Absolution*** The Lord brings light to those in darkness, forgiveness to those who truly confess, and pardon to all who seek to follow Jesus. Rejoice that the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever and ever. In the name of Jesus the Christ, receive the love that never dies and never fails. **Amen**

**Dramatized bible reading**

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| --- | --- |
| Narration  with puppet  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (Chris)  (mum)  (mum, as shepherd)  (Chris)  (mum, as shepherd)  (Chris)  (mum)  (mum, as shepherd)  (Chris)  **Hymn** | I didn’t mean to cause all that trouble. I just wanted a bit of excitement, that’s all. Being a sheep isn’t all outings and entertainment, you know – in fact it can be pretty grim. We seem to spend most of our time walking from place to place looking for a bit of decent grass. Now travel’s one thing, but what we do is hardly a sighseeing tour. The only sight we get most of the time is the back view of the sheep in front and, take it from me, there’s nothing very much exciting about that! Some sheep are even worse than us, though, they have to put up with some pretty awful shepherds, who don’t feed them properly and sometimes even let the wolves get to them!  Our shepherd’s good – Joshua’s his name. (enter, mum as shepherd carrying some sheep) Not all people like him, but then people are funny that way, aren’t they? He’s very popular with the sheep (stroke sheep) He really cares about us, and a good thing too or I would’ve got myself in real trouble by now! (exit shepherd)  I was always a bit of a rebel – I didn’t think God put us on this earth to follow one another about looking for food – so I was always wandering off looking for excitement. My mother used to get so mad:  “One day, you’ll get into real trouble!”  I never believed her (Chris wanders off)  I just longed to be big enough to go off on my own without her stopping me. Then one day, I got my chance. We’d stopped to feed on some juicy grass, and I could see some that was even greener, just up the hill. So off I went and no one noticed. I was right – it was good stuff!. Then I thought-  “If it’s like this here, it must be even better further on.”  So off I trotted and sure enough, there was some lovely grass just the other side of the hill. The trouble was that I soon got lonely. I missed my mum and dad, and all my sisters and my cousins and aunts in the flock. But when I tried to get back, (look around) I couldn’t find my way. I was sure I’d gone back over the same hill, but I couldn’t have (look puzzled). It was all different. There wasn’t much grass and there was no sign of the little stream we’d been drinking at.  (look at audience with hands on hips) “Well, beautiful green grass is nice enough in its own way, but when you’ve got no-one to share it with, it doesn’t seem so much fun.”  I thought I’d better try a different direction. But when I got to the next hill, I couldn’t see anything I recognized at all (look around confused).I was getting really frightened.  (quietly) “But don’t tell my mum I said that, will you, because she’d only say ‘I told you so!’”  I began to think I’d never get back. All this excitement was getting me down, and walking along looking at the rear view of another sheep seemed like a wonderful idea! As it began to get dark, I thought I’d really had it. On cold nights, we used to huddle together to keep warm and the prospect of being out there on my own, with no-one to snuggle up to, wasn’t very nice at all. I thought I’d better try and find a cave to shelter in, just in case it rained. So I tried to turn and look around and had the fright of my life.  Somehow, I’d wandered onto the side of the cliff, I was standing on a ledge so narrow there was no way I could even turn around. Now I was really scared (look really frightened)  Then I heard something which really made me prick my ears up. I heard a whistle (blow whistle lightly) oh, it’s not just any old whistle. Joshua had a very special way of whistling to call us back if we were wandering off – and that’s what I’d heard. If I hadn’t been standing where I was, I’d have jumped for joy (look happy & excited). So I just gave out a little  “Baa”  and hoped he’d hear me. I heard the whistle again (whistle, bit louder) – this time closer than before. So I gave him another  “Baa”  and that’s how we went on... (whistle...baa whistle...baa, whistle...baa)  until he was at the cliff top just above me.  “You wait there and I’ll be down to you”  “as if I’d do anything else! And then he scrambled down to where I was ”  “I don’t know how you got here, but I’ll get you somewhere safer. (pick up floppy sheep and put around neck)”  “I tell you, I closed my eyes and hung on. That was another thing my parents found embarrassing about me – a sheep that’s scared of heights, I ask you!”  When we got to the top, I thought Joshua was going to carry me all the way home on his shoulders, like in those lovely pictures you’ve probably seen, but he put me down. He must have guessed what I was thinking:  “Come on, you walked here, I’m sure you can walk back again. But don’t worry, I’ll be right with you all the way.”  (stand at front, facing audience, arm around Chris) And he was, too – he never left me. Since that day, I’ve taken a bit more notice of things – it’s not so bad travelling, if you take the time to look around. In fact, we get to see some pretty exciting places sometimes. All I have to do is turn my head to the side – can’t think why I didn’t think of it before  I’m special because God has loved me |

# Responding to god’s word

**Written By June Robinson Spoken by Laura Stuart**

**The Good Shepherd**

‘I am the Good Shepherd’ is the fourth, of seven,’ I am’ declarations of Jesus recorded only in John’s Gospel. These ‘I am’ proclamations point to Jesus’ unique divine identity and purpose. In using the phrase ‘the good shepherd’ Jesus is referencing his inherent goodness and his righteousness. He is the one who protects and guides and nurtures his flock. He is the true and faithful shepherd who willingly gives up his life for his sheep. It is only through him that we receive salvation.

The parable of the lost sheep is a wonderful story told by Jesus to illustrate the love and compassion that God has for us. It displays beautiful meaning of god seeking out the lost sinner and rejoicing when they are found. We serve the Good Shepherd whose heart is for us to be found, rescued, renewed and forgiven. In the story this morning the lost sheep at one point began to think that he would never get back. I think we feel a little like this at the moment with the very sad and fearful situation we have with the Covid 19 virus. We feel that life will not get back to how it used to be. Yet in these upsetting times we see, on a daily basis, acts of compassion, bravery, help, concern for others, kindness and love; qualities we know Lord you want us to have.

We can also feel that we will never get back to God’s love when we have done something wrong, or have failed to do something we should have done, but Jesus said ‘I know my sheep just as the father knows me and I know the father’. He knows when we are sad, lost or sick. We can go to him when we are in trouble and he will comfort us. We know we can be forgiven. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus died for each and every one of us and promises life with him.

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*How might you think about what you have just read? You could:* Think what was your favourite part of that passage/story? I wonder which part surprised or puzzled you? I wonder what it tells us about god. I wonder how it helps us to live as christians.

Look around where you have gathered and find something to bring to the circle that helps you think more about what you have heard.

# Hymn *O God you search me and you know me*

# Time to pray with Camilla and Eli

And the prayer from Mothers union

Cast all your care upon Christ our Redeemer,

and trust in His promise to be by your side.

His love will uphold you, His arms will enfold you,

Let Him be your Saviour, your Shepherd and Guide.

Fret not nor fear, for whatever befalls you,

Remember for love of you Jesus was slain.

In dying for us, He shared all human sorrow

And bore on His shoulders the weight of your pain

Though life be fraught with all manners of sorrows

The stresses and strains that beset us each day.

Be firm in your faith for the Lord will be with you,

And be by your side as your strength and your stay

(*taken from Mothers Union prayer book ‘Dear Lord’ & written by Rev Dr John Davey)*

**Lords 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.**

# Blessing

***Leader***: may god keep us, may Christ shield us, may the spirit bring us healing and peace. May god the trinity keep us in light and grace today and forever.

***Everyone***: **amen.**

**Hymn** The Lords my shepherd

*Compiled in part by Mary hawes ©the archbishops' council of the church of England Mary.hawes@churchofengland.org*