

12th October, 2025

The paper-version Service



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks
Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
"Alleluia! Alleluia!"

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise Him, O praise Him!
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!

Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice,
O praise Him, O praise Him!
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

And all ye men of tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!

Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God and on Him cast your
care;
O praise Him, O praise Him!
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship Him in humbleness;
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the
Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;
O praise Him, O praise Him!
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Revelation 2:8-11 and John 1:43-51 – The Faithful Bride

Today we return to our Revelation series with the second of the letters, the letter to Smyrna. Smyrna is today called Izmir – second largest city in Turkey. 700 years before John writes, it had been destroyed and been unoccupied for 300 years, but the population slowly returned and it knows rivals Ephesus as a thriving metropolis – it had its own resurrection, once dead now alive. And this is how Jesus is presented, both as the ‘First and Last’ and the one ‘who died and came to life again.’

The person of Jesus is uniquely introduced in each letter, reinforcing the nature of God in Christ. Note again 1:5; 1:8; and 1:17-18. Why is this so important to know who this God is?

We live in a world that gives us glimpses of the beauty and wonder of God in creation and acts of love. But, this world, and at times our lives, are a mess. Politicians can’t fix the world, and doctors, family, nor ourselves can fix our lives.

But, God is big enough. Though everything can appear shaky, God is a solid and dependable place to be. Read Psalm 18:2 and Psalm 144:1-4 & 15. And if you are able see also Job 38-41 and Isaiah 40:12-31.

God is big enough, and He knows and cares. The God of the past, present, and future, knows all about you, your past, your present and your future. Read Psalm 139:2-4. Notice in verse 9 of our passage twice we read ‘I know’.

God knows our suffering, and he has suffered with us – think of the cross. God knows our poverty and he has become poor for us. Read Philippians 2:5-11. God knows that we are slandered. The slander came from the father of lies, Satan, via the very people, the Jews, who were their kin. Jesus was lied about, betrayed by his very own friends and people, and so might we be – we’re in an unprecedented age of fake news.

God is big enough and He knows and cares, so, 'Do not be afraid' (v.10). The exact phrase "do not be afraid" appears 81 times in the NIV version of the Bible. But include phrases like "fear not," "do not fear," and "do not worry," there are well over 300 reassurances of 'God has got this'. Throughout the Bible from Abraham (Genesis 15), Moses (Numbers 21:34), Joshua (Joshua 8:1, et al), Joseph (Matthew 1:20) & Mary (Luke 1:30), to John (Revelation 1:17), the saints have been reminded that we do not need to be afraid, about the state of the world, or the state of our lives.

In the context of our God who has got this, we are assured that the any suffering will be 'short' – symbolised by the number '10' (v. 10). And that we will receive a crown of life, and avoid the 'second death', that is the judgement we deserve as sinners. The salvation and promise of God caused Paul to write: *'I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.'* Romans 8:18.

We are called to look beyond and live in hope. We are called to faithfulness, and to know that God's perfect love will drive out all fear – do not be afraid.

17th Sunday after Trinity: Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The 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.**

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: October 15th and November 19th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: October 22nd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>