

# 17<sup>th</sup> August, 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:**

The sun comes up, it's a new day  
dawning;  
It's time to sing Your song again.  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies  
before me,  
Let me be singing when the evening  
comes.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
O my soul, worship His holy Name.  
Sing like never before, O my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy Name.

You're rich in love and You're slow to  
anger,  
Your Name is great and Your heart is  
kind;  
For all Your goodness I will keep on  
singing,  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to  
find.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
O my soul, worship His holy Name.  
Sing like never before, O my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy Name.

And on that day when my strength is  
failing,  
The end draws near and my time has  
come;  
Still my soul sings Your praise  
unending,  
Ten thousand years and then  
forevermore.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
O my soul, worship His holy Name.  
Sing like never before, O my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy Name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
O my soul, worship His holy Name.  
Sing like never before, O my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy Name.

## The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

### Read Psalm 101 and Luke 6:20-26 — I will be Careful

Psalm 101, could be called godly living 101. In this Psalm there is a commitment to worship and service.

Singing of God's love makes much sense. God's love is such a comfort and assurance. And, it is demonstrated so dramatically upon the cross when Christ died for us.

Singing of God's justice – is this something to sing about? Well, yes! Most, if not all of us, are passionate about justice, about things being fair – especially when it's us that has been cheated or affronted. Most of us want to see things put right, and properly restored to the rightful place – God wants this too. He wants what has been broken to be fixed, and this is at heart of justice.

Love without justice is soft and dangerous, therefore not loved. A supposed loved child, who is spoilt, is literally spoilt, ruined by the soft love which sets no without boundaries, free to do whatever they want without consequences will likely grow up as delinquent, damaging themselves and others in the process.

Love and justice are demonstrated on the cross. John Stott writes: *'When we look at the cross we see the justice, love, wisdom and power of God. It is not easy to decide which is the most luminously revealed, whether the justice of God in judging sin, or the love of God in bearing the judgment in our place, or the wisdom of God in perfectly combining the two, or the power of God in saving those who believe. For the cross is equally an act, and therefore a demonstration, of God's justice, love, wisdom and power. The cross assures us that this God is the reality within, behind and beyond the universe.'*

There's a suggestion that David penned this psalm at the beginning of his reign as a commitment of how he would live his life and run the country. It presents as a manifesto – a public declaration of intent. It's a commitment

stating that there's an intent to be a person of integrity, that is, that the 'good' outside is matched by the 'good' inside.

'People look on the outside, God looks on the heart,' God told Samuel, shortly before David was anointed to be the new king (1 Samuel 16:7). The psalm includes personal and private behaviour. You can fool some of the people, the public, all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people, your family and close friends, all the time!

The list commitments in this Psalm is like a pre-flight list, of the things to be checked before setting off. They are 'I will' commitments, like a legal promise in a wedding, more than a desire they are like making a vow

The commitments can be summarised:

1. Being careful where and how we look (v.3).
2. Being careful who influences us (vs.3-4).
3. Being careful about how what we listen to (v.5).
4. Being careful to look to the good (vs.6-7).
5. Being careful to have a daily discipline (v.8).

This seems an impossible task. We know we do not succeed but we can aspire. David failed to live up to them. He allowed himself to look at Bathsheba, and this grew into desire, which became adultery and murder. He allowed the evil of his 'beloved' children to go unpunished and unrestrained, and amongst his bodyguard were those who'd committed crimes under the cover of war, about which he knew.

God love and justice as demonstrated upon the cross, is available to us. God's presence – come to me (v.2) – is available if we call. See Psalm 51. 'Have mercy' (v.1). 'Create in me a pure heart' (v.10).

There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus – because Christ has suffered and died for us. Such is his love. This love and his justice can be a focus for us, that he is worthy of our praise and worship, our service. And keeping our eyes daily on him, makes it less easy to stray.

Make a decision each day to follow Jesus. Seek His daily help to live as godly people reflecting His holiness and glory, with grace, love and justice.

**9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity:** *Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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: August 20<sup>th</sup> and September 17<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: August 27<sup>th</sup> 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>