

Christ, the Good Shepherd



St Aidan's Uniting Church
21st April 2024
Easter 4

Call to Worship

Christ is like a Good Shepherd –
caring for the flock,
a flock with its different personalities
and different opinions.

**We gather as part of the flock
responding to the call of the Good Shepherd,
and together we worship God.**

Prayers

God, our loving shepherd,
we might be your sheep,
but sometimes we behave more
like rebellious goats.

For the times we have heard your voice
and yet turned to follow our own paths,
Good shepherd,
**call us again;
forgive us again.**

When you show us green pastures and still waters
and yet we go in search of other blessings,
Good shepherd,
**call us again;
forgive us again.**

When we turn to you in distress
because we have walked our own paths,
Good shepherd,
**call us again;
forgive us again.**

When we see your goodness and mercy
as something we have earned,
rather than as signs of your grace,
Good shepherd,

**call us again;
forgive us again.**

Help us to listen more clearly to your voice,
give us the courage to start again.

Amen.

Words of Assurance

The grace of God is a free gift for us all,
know that when we confess
and turn our lives again to God
we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of Intercession

God our Shepherd,
we pray for all your sheep,
spread across the world,
and living in different sheep-pens.

We pray for the sheep
who have been taken by thieves,
who come to hurt and destroy
the lives of your sheep.

We pray for the sheep who need healing
to have their wounds bound
and their heads anointed with oil,
whether this healing is physical, emotional, or spiritual.

We pray for the hired hands
who are called to care for the sheep
and yet do not reap the benefits of that care
and so struggle when they are threatened.

We pray for all your sheep
who need to know your loving care,
who need to know what it is to truly be loved
so they can love others.
Amen.

Benediction & Blessing

The sheep are gathered to the fold,
and are taken out to their pastures.
We too go out to God's pastures,
to walk alongside
in caring for God's sheep.

And as you go may you always know
the love of God surrounds you,
Christ, the Companion, walks with you,
and the Spirit leads you on the dance of life.