



Sunday 25th April 2021, 11:00am

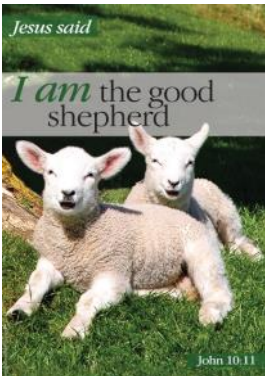
**Our service marks the 240th
Anniversary of Ardoch Parish Church
opening for public worship**



The service is led by
The Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair
who is this year's
Moderator of the General Assembly
of the Church of Scotland



His theme is "Who's following?"
We read from Psalm 23 and John 10



Whether you are one of those who has a seat in the building, or you're watching on livestream (via ardochparishchurch.org) or you're reading this Order of Service at home, thank you for setting aside this time to worship God and read his word. We trust that you are refreshed and stimulated by doing this.

Our opening hymn was written in the 15th century by Joachim Neander and still encourages us today to "join in glad adoration."

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Come, all who hear; now to his temple draw near,
join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning;
sheltering you under his wings, and so gently sustaining!
Have you not seen all that is needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
if with his love he befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen sound from his people again;
gladly forever adore him.

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

**Our second hymn might be considered a modern classic.
It prepares us to read the biblical text that inspired it.**

The Lord's my shepherd,
I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

Chorus:

And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.

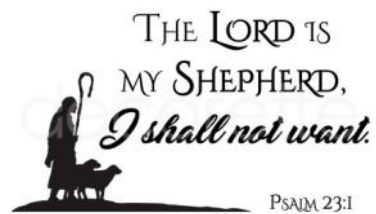
He guides my ways
in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff,
Are the comfort I need to know.

Words & Music: Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou Music

We have two related readings this morning. In the service they will be read by Eleanor Thomas, the youngest Communicant Member of Ardoch Parish Church. First, Psalm 23.

- ¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
- ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
- ³ He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
- ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
- ⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.



Then we turn to the New Testament and to John's Gospel chapter 10 verses 11-18.

- ¹¹ 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.
- ¹⁴ 'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.'

John 10:11

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.



Dr Fair's sermon is entitled, "Who's following?"

We don't have the text of Martin's sermon but note that:

- ◆ Shepherds in Jesus day would have led the flock from front, rather than driving from behind
- ◆ Sheep knew that the shepherd was worth following because they were provided with all they needed; green pasture, quiet waters, guidance, and the comfort of the shepherd's presence.
- ◆ Such pictures inspired David to realise that he too was treated to goodness and love in following God and spending eternity in the house of the Lord
- ◆ Jesus told those who were listening, if you're thinking about following God, follow me, because I am the Good Shepherd which Psalm 23 point to.
- ◆ Following the Good Shepherd, means following him as he lays down his life. Are you still following this?
- ◆ Following Jesus is not something we do anonymously or from a distance. We're meant to be close enough to get to know him as he knows us.



**Our next hymn, like Amazing Grace,
was written in the 1700s by former slave trader, John Newton**

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
and drives away our fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.

O Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend,
my Prophet, Priest, and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring.

How weak the effort of my heart,
how cold my warmest thought;
but when I see you as you are,
I'll praise you as I ought.

Till then I would your love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of your name
refresh my soul in death.

We take time to pray for others. Each Sunday the Moderator and other national church leaders invite us to join them in prayer for the nation at 7pm. We use the words of the prayer offered for this week as the imagery also comes from the 23rd Psalm.

Lord our God,
We listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd,
For he is the One who will guard us and keep us
And lead us safe home.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord our God,
We listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd,
For he has spoken to us throughout all our days
And still he speaks, even amidst the clamour of the day.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord our God,
We listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd,
For he has nurtured and provided for us
And lifted us up, even when we have fallen.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord our God,
We listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd,
For he is the One who has laid down his life for us
In order that we might have life, even in the face of darkness.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord our God,
We listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd,
For your goodness and mercy still follows us
And you shall lead us safe home, even at the end of our days.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer. Amen.

Our final hymn repeats a well-known final line in each verse even if the writer is not well know; maybe he wanted that!

Your hand, O God, has guided
your flock from age to age;
your faithfulness is written
on history's open page.
Our fathers owned your goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both to this bear witness:
one church, one faith, one Lord!
Your heralds brought the gospel
to greatest and the least;
they summoned men and women
to share the great King's feast.
And this was all their teaching
in ev'ry deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming:
one church, one faith, one Lord!
Your mercy will not fail us
nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us
the vict'ry shall be won.
And then by earth and heaven
your name shall be adored;
and this shall be our anthem:
one church, one faith, one Lord!

Words & Music: Edward H. Plumptre (1864)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.
Amen.

May the God of peace go with us'
As we travel from this place;
May the love of Jesus keep us
Firm in hope and full of grace.
Words: Ian Jamieson, Tune: Ae Fond Kiss

Now, some notices!

Next Sunday's services, focusing on another "I am" statement of Jesus, will be led by Gordon Roy with a live (and live-streamed) service in Ardoch Parish Church at 10:00am and pre-recorded service on the Blackford website. Printed Orders of Service will also be available.

Sunday 9th May is our Communion Sunday. It remains easier to share this at home than in church buildings, so it's a joint service on Zoom at 11.00am that day.

From **Sunday 16th May**, both buildings will be open for worship, with the plan being for the face-to-face service in Ardoch 10:00am to also be livestreamed. The Blackford service will be at 11:30am.

The Link magazine will be coming out next week with photos from today's anniversary service. If you'd like a larger print copy please speak to your elder or Session Clerk by Tuesday evening please.

If you're not online and not joining face to face, your options on the TV this Sunday include:

10:45 BBC1 Reflections at the Quay. The Rev Richard Frazer of Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh and the Rev Fiona Bennett of Augustinian URC Church, Edinburgh present this week's Reflections.

12:00 BBC Scotland The Service A service from Shettleston New Church of Scotland in Glasgow, led by Louis Reddick.

1:15 BBC 2 Songs of Praise Rev Kate Bottley visits the new Bridgewater Gardens in Salford to celebrate spring, and Gemma Hunt joins a Christian couple bringing joy to families through cooking.

Blackford Parish Church, CCLI Licence Number: 880762

Ardoch Parish Church, CCLI Licence Numbers:

8326, 709991, 2287040, 1028468

Blackford Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC005594

Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139

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240 years ago on 25th March, 1781, the Chapel of Ease, now known as Ardoch Parish Church was opened for public worship by the Rev David Simpson.



Our photograph is the oldest one we own and shows the church with full length windows. In 1862 the galleries on the north and south sides were removed and some of the windows on the south side were built up. The pulpit instead of being in the centre of the church was placed at the east end. Later an entrance vestibule and choir chancel were added.

