

twelvebaskets

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EASTER 4A

26th April 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Use the following words to help centre yourself in the moment. Say them out loud, or speak them in your mind.

Jesus, open my heart.

Prepare yourself to hear God's word in a new way.

Jesus, open my heart.

Listen for God's voice, calling you to serve others and love radically.

Jesus, open my heart.

Hold the joys, regrets and frustrations from the week, and look ahead to the opportunities next week will bring.

Jesus, open my heart.

Hold the people you share your life with, and the challenges that come with relationships and friendships.

Jesus, open my heart.

Rest a moment in the quiet.

Jesus, open my heart.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Opening hymn / song

20 STF – Be still for the presence of the Lord – [YouTube](#)

Reading: John 10:1-10 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

In this passage, Jesus uses imagery that would have been very familiar to his listeners: sheep, shepherds, and a sheepfold. For those living in an agricultural society, these images spoke of daily life: of care, vulnerability, protection, and trust.

But Jesus is not really talking about farming.

He contrasts two ways of relating to people: the way of the thief, who climbs in by another way to steal and destroy, and the way of the shepherd, who enters by the gate and calls the sheep by name. The sheep recognise the shepherd's voice because they know it. They trust it. They follow.

And then Jesus makes a surprising claim: "I am the gate."

A gate does two things. It protects what is inside, and it creates a way through. A gate keeps danger out, but it also opens a path to freedom. Jesus is not describing a narrow barrier meant to exclude people; rather, he presents himself as the way into safety, belonging, and life that flourishes.

Later he says something that echoes through the centuries: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

That word abundant is important. Jesus is not offering a small, cramped life defined by fear or rigid rules. The life he describes is expansive—full of meaning, compassion, connection, and hope.

For those of us who follow Jesus today, especially those seeking a thoughtful, inclusive faith, this passage invites us to listen carefully for the voice that leads toward life rather than fear.

There are many voices competing for our attention: voices that promise security through exclusion, voices that thrive on anxiety or control. But Jesus suggests that his voice is different. It calls us toward freedom, trust, and deeper humanity.

Discipleship, then, is not about blindly following authority. It is about learning to recognise the voice that nurtures life. So today, consider:

- What voices are shaping your choices and beliefs right now?
- Which voices lead toward compassion, justice, and flourishing: and which lead toward fear or division?
- How might you listen more closely for the voice of the Good Shepherd in your daily life?

Jesus promises not simply survival, but abundant life, life that flows outward in generosity, creativity, and love.

And perhaps the question for us is this: Are we willing to step through the gate and follow where that life leads?

May you learn to recognise the voice that calls you by name, and may it lead you into deeper freedom, courage, and joy.

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

The love of Christ flows through you.

The peace of God echoes around you.

The grace of the Spirit moves with you.

As you leave this time, this space, may you know the presence of the Triune God, blessing your path, guiding your feet, encouraging your next step, in the journey of discipleship.

Go in peace.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 27th April

- 'There's some good in this world...and its worth fighting for.'
- These words from JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings are an inspiration to many. Perhaps today, in your prayers, you might like to think about the 'good' in the world. What are you giving thanks for, and prepared to work to defend, today and this week?

Tuesday 28th April

- God of all grace,
Today I come to you, recognising that I cannot do anything in my own strength,
But that I am carried by the gift of your Spirit, present in my life.
Help me to follow in your way, and lead me by straight paths, I pray.
Amen.

Wednesday 29th April

- On this day in 1945, Dachau concentration camp was liberated by US troops.
- 81 years later, the world still grieves for the horrendous crimes committed by the Nazi regime.
- Today, maybe hold a period of silent prayer in memory of all who died or suffered, and perhaps reflect on all the wounds that our world still carries from previous generations.

Thursday 30th April

- Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of my every breath and each decision I must make this day,
Guide me, walk with me, I pray,
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday 1st May

- Today is the first day of May, the beginning of the Celtic season of Beltane, a celebration of the arrival of the start of Summer.
- Today, maybe there is an opportunity to feast, to celebrate, to treat yourself, and to give thanks for the turning of the year towards light, hope and longer days.

Saturday 2nd May

- On this day in 1611, the King James Bible was published and printed for the first time in London. A seminal work of English Literature, and perhaps the single most famous translation of Scripture into English, this was an important moment in the development of the Church in the UK.
- Today, why not use your prayers to give thanks for generations of Bible scholars, who have carefully preserved, reflected on, interpreted and translated these ancient texts to help us wrestle with them and make sense of them today.