

**4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER****ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings:**<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:42-47 / Psalm 23 / 1 Peter 2:1-10 / John 10:1-10**Theme:** *"Following the Good Shepherd in a Fragile World"***Acts 2:41-47**

<sup>41</sup> So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about three thousand persons were added. <sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

<sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**Psalm 23*****The Divine Shepherd******A Psalm of David.***

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil,

for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.

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**1 Peter 2:1-10**

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

<sup>4</sup> Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and <sup>5</sup> like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

<sup>7</sup> This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the very head of the corner,"

<sup>8</sup> and

"A stone that makes them stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

<sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people,  
but now you are God's people;  
once you had not received mercy,  
but now you have received mercy.

**John 10:1-10**

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

## SERMON

Jesus declares, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”*<sup>2</sup>. This is not only a statement about who Jesus is; it is a revelation of how God acts in the world and how Christ’s followers are called to live. The Good Shepherd leads not through domination or distance, but through presence, sacrifice, and care for those most exposed to harm.

*“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want”*<sup>3</sup>. With these words, the psalmist anchors this vision in trust, confronting the anxiety that shapes much of human life, even contemporary life. Economic insecurity, housing instability, and eroding trust in institutions leave many living with constant uncertainty. The psalm does not deny hardship—*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley”*<sup>4</sup>—but insists that God’s companionship reshapes how we move through it. For Christians, lived faith begins by trusting God enough to resist fear-driven living and scarcity-centred thinking. The sheep likely do not understand the shepherd’s thinking, but they know the safety he provides.

In John 10:1–10, Jesus warns of voices that exploit vulnerability. *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy”*<sup>5</sup>. In our own context, societal and individual, systems that prioritise profit over people, and policies that leave the most vulnerable without secure shelter, echo this destructive pattern. Jesus, by contrast, offers *“life, and have it abundantly”*<sup>6</sup>.

Abundant life is not private comfort; it is shared wellbeing. To follow the Shepherd today is to scrutinise which voices we trust and which pathways we normalise—especially when others are left behind. We must test our presumptions and biases.

In Acts 2:42–47, we witness what life shaped by the Good Shepherd looks like in practice. The early believers shared resources, practised hospitality, and ensured that needs were met within the community. *“All who believed were together and had all things in common”*<sup>7</sup>. This was not idealism, but discipleship made visible.

In a housing-pressured society, where the rising cost of living means choosing between a meal and medication, this passage challenges the church – Us- to ask whether our communal life genuinely reflects God’s care for those at risk of exclusion. Faithful worship is inseparable from economic generosity, shared responsibility, and relational trust.

St Peter names the church’s vocation clearly: *“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people”*<sup>8</sup>. This identity is given *“in order that you may proclaim”* God’s light through lived witness. In times when trust is fragile—between neighbours, generations, and institutions—Christians are called to embody reliability, mercy, and

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<sup>2</sup> John 10:11

<sup>3</sup> Ps 23:1

<sup>4</sup> Ps 23:4

<sup>5</sup> John 10:10

<sup>6</sup> John 10:10

<sup>7</sup> Acts 2:44

<sup>8</sup> 1 Pet 2:9

integrity. Lived faith becomes credible when the church is known not for self-protection, but for costly presence.

So what action does this discipleship invite, particularly amid socioeconomic and housing challenges?

As individuals, following the Good Shepherd means practising attentiveness: noticing those made invisible by instability, listening without judgment, and using personal resources—time, advocacy, generosity—to support dignity rather than charity alone. It means resisting narratives that blame individuals for systemic hardship and instead choosing compassion shaped by truth.

As a faith community, discipleship takes collective form.

Acts remind us that shared life is itself a witness. Churches can cultivate trustworthy spaces where resources are pooled, relationships prioritised, and partnerships formed with those working for housing justice and social wellbeing. Such action does not require the church to solve every problem, but to refuse indifference. The Good Shepherd's self-giving love becomes tangible when the flock moves together toward those most exposed to harm.

Ultimately, John 10:11 returns us to the heart of Christian discipleship. The Shepherd lays down his life—and invites his followers to pattern their lives after that same generous love. In a world marked by insecurity and mistrust, the church must bear witness by living differently: trusting God, sharing life, and making space for others to find safety, dignity, and hope within the flock.

Faith is vital; expression is visible.

Let us pray,

Good Shepherd, guide us beyond fear into generous trust. Shape us as a people who listen, share, and act with courage. Where life feels fragile, make us signs of abundant love, justice, and hope, for your world today together. Amen.