

Stay Connected – 26th April 2026

Fourth Sunday of Easter

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: John 10: 1-10

Peter's Blurb

"Come to St. Mark's – not just a church but a family!"

Help needed! My eloquent (🙄) appeal last week for addition volunteers as Welcomers at our Sunday 9.30 am services drew **zero response**. So let me repeat it here:

"... some gaps have opened up this quarter for Welcomers. It is a simple task, arrive a bit early and be at the door of the church to greet people. Especially important for newcomers or visitors that we present a welcoming greeting. Also good to greet old friends too. Looking for volunteer Welcomers for May 3rd & 10th and also for the month of June. Just let me know and I will be happy to have your help.

And while on the subject, may I also invite anyone who would like to assist as either a Reader or as an Intercessor (Pray-er) it would be lovely to have some new voices. For a Reader the text would be provided in advance to give you time to practice and get your tongue around unfamiliar words, names etc. As an Intercessor you can decide whether to write your own prayers or have some sent to you. The proposed schedule for the next quarter is circulated in advance to allow the opportunity to resolve date conflicts. And it's typically once/quarter. Just let Fr. Terry or myself know of your possible interest. The more the merrier! 🙄

Today, with Fr. Terry and Nicole enjoying a well-earned rest from parochial labours, we were blessed to be led in worship by the ever-effervescent Rev. Jennie who spoke to us on the Good Shepherd leading his flock. (See **"Rev. Jennie's Talk"** below). When you consider all the study, learning and preparation Fr. Terry has undergone over the past several years through his Ordination, first as Deacon, then more work to his second Ordination as a full Priest, you will realize that it's no easy task following the calling. Then followed his decision to respond to God's calling to the incumbency here at St. Mark's and his subsequent Installation as our Priest-in-Charge in which we all rejoice 😊. Whew! I find it exhausting just writing of it so I am glad that Fr. Terry & Nicole have the opportunity to enjoy some R & R in whatever they are doing and wherever and with whomever they are doing it. We keep them in our prayers and look forward to having them back with us this coming Sunday. 🙄

Guild News

St. Mark's Guild's 82nd Anniversary Evensong Service in the afternoon went very well. Between 60 and 80 folk attended and most of the Church Guilds in the Diocese were represented as evidenced by the greetings shared at the excellent tea which followed the service. The choir acquitted themselves very well with the hymns and with the well known song – "The Goodness of God" sung as an Anthem. The guest speaker was **The Very Revd Calvert Prentis, Sub Dean and Canon Residentiary, The Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity**. He was introduced by Guild President Pansy Nichols and thanked by Guild member Leta Woolridge. The text of Canon Calvert' address is presented below (see **Canon Calvert's Address**).

Annual General Meeting

It is coming up to the time of year when the parishes of the Diocese are required to hold their Annual General Meetings. For those unfamiliar, reports are submitted from the various activities ("departments") in the church

including Financial Reports, Properties etc. These are presented for information and discussion. A new Vestry is elected by the members to manage the affairs of the church for the next year. The deadline for the submission of reports is 3rd May to give time for the Annual Report to be consolidated, printed and distributed in advance of the meeting. The Vestry, under the chairmanship of Rev. Terry, consists of two Churchwardens who serve a four-year term plus a number of regular members who each serve a term of three years. Rotation is staggered so that continuity is maintained. There are likely some vacancies opening up this year and anyone who is interested in helping the church in this capacity should speak to Dudley Cottingham, choir member, who has been designated, by the Vestry, as Chairman of the Nominating Committee. He will be happy to explain how it all works, what vacancies exist and you may then consider "putting your name in the hat" for possible selection.

The Annual General Meeting will be held following our 9.30 service on **Sunday, 17th May** immediately following refreshments.

Rev. Jennie's Talk

4th Sunday of Easter

26 April 2026

John 10:10

Today: the 4th Sunday of Easter - also Vocations Sunday - when we take time to consider where God is calling each one of us. God calls every one of us. We use the language of "coming to church" but WE ARE the church and every one of us is called to some kind of ministry in the church....and what a wonderful church this is... there are those who serve in music, in leading various groups, those who are devoted to prayer, help with serving refreshments, welcoming people, technology, the list is endless..

And all of these things are part of the ministry of the church...

And I know that there will be some of you who have not yet found the place where God is calling you to serve... but sometimes if we're not yet sure it can be good to try serving *somewhere* in the church in the meantime and see where God leads...God wants us to have abundant life in him and he calls us to be a part of the church, the body of Christ.

Back to today's scripture and we'll consider what this has to do with our vocations.

If Jesus wasn't who we know him to be, a reading like this one (John 10:1-10) might cause us to wonder at the...identity crisis of this guy... ok.. he thinks he's a door... or a gate (depending on the English translation of the bible you are using).

In the gospel according to John, Jesus makes 7 metaphorical "I am" statements...

- **"I am the bread of life" (John 6:35, 48, 51):** Jesus provides spiritual sustenance.
- **"I am the light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5):** Jesus offers spiritual guidance and removes darkness.
- **"I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7, 9):** Jesus is the only entrance to salvation and security.
- **"I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14):** Jesus is the caring protector who lays down his life.
- **"I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25):** Jesus offers victory over death.
- **"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6):** Jesus is the only means of access to God.
- **"I am the true vine" (John 15:1, 5):** Jesus is the source of spiritual life, enabling followers to bear fruit.

Some of the others are perhaps a bit more self-explanatory... This one where Jesus calls himself the gate or the door for the sheep might seem to be one of the more obscure..... and then later in the passage Jesus says that he is a shepherd... which makes more sense to our ears in light of all the references to shepherds in the scripture... including perhaps the most widely known of all the Psalms: Psalm 23 "the Lord is my shepherd"he speaks of his

role as our shepherd later in the passage... to which we might answer.. “but Jesus you just said that you are a door...”

Actually the two statements pair with each other....

What do you know about sheep?

They are certainly one of the most vulnerable of all domesticated animals... they do not challenge predators... where many other animals will either stand their guard or scatter, they huddle together and become easier prey...

They rely on their shepherd... they follow his or her voice...they have strong peripheral vision and can even see behind themselves somewhat but their front vision is less good... they can distinguish voices (of sheep and people). And they know the voice of their shepherd.

There was a great deal of pastoral land in Judaea....so these images would be familiar even to those who were not shepherds themselves... Sheep were a source of food, clothing and of course sacrifice for sin offering to the Lord. A lot of this pastoral land was rocky though, so the sheep would be prone to wander looking for grass... the shepherd had to lead them to green pastures for grazing.

Sheep are afraid of running water, they will only drink from still water, hence the verse in Psalm 23, “he leads me beside still waters”

Jesus actually describes **2 types of sheep folds/sheep pens** in this parable... with two different types of door:

In the towns and villages there were **communal sheep folds** where all the village flocks would be led for the night... the gatekeeper would hold the keys... and even though there may be multiple flocks in one fold... each sheep would know the sound of its own shepherd’s voice so it was not difficult to separate them.

Hillside sheep folds

This was basically a walled pen with an opening where sheep would go in and out

The job of the shepherd was not easy... shepherds were always on duty looking after their flocks. Once the sheep were safely in the hillside sheepfold, the shepherd would lie across the opening, to guard the gate, or to BE the gate.

Jesus’s words are at first a bit of a riddle... but he unpeels the layers of what he is saying to them in this passage. I think we have some understanding of the Lord as our shepherd: our guide and protector... but there is another element that Jesus wants us to understand when he tells us that he is the gate, door. The gate is protection but the gate is also the way in which the sheep are led into good pasture. They have to leave the sheepfold through the gate to enter good pasture...The gate is the way that we are led into **abundant life**. As one theologian has put it: ***Our gateway to life is made out of the wood of the cross.***

We may actually prefer the imagery of the shepherd and the gate as our protector. Sometimes abundant life may seem scary... abundance does not always feel quite as safe....

Our shepherd wants to lead us into green pastures, into abundant life..

But Jesus warns about the “thief” who comes only to steal and kill and destroy” ... and this is where we have a lesson to learn from the sheep...

Sheep will not answer to the voice of a stranger.. they know their shepherd’s voice.

There are all kinds of voices in our lives trying to “steal and kill and destroy”.. all kinds of things that seek to grab our attention, our allegiance... and some of these things look like good things.. they look attractive.. some of them may even have the appearance on the surface of being holy..

But Christ calls us into deep relationship with him.. he calls us to know him.. to know his voice.

As we seek the Lord with our whole being, as we contemplate on his scriptures, devote ourselves to prayer and to worship.. we come to know him more and we learn to discern.. I pray that we will listen for his voice as he leads us into the abundant life that he promised... sometimes the road on the way to green pastures seems rocky... not easy... but he has promised us that abundant life is found in him. It is his purpose... He says I came that they might have life and have it abundantly. And in this abundance is also found our vocation in the life of his church.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly.

I love this statement. John 3:16 is often called the gospel in a nutshell.... And John 10:10 is a reminder of God’s desire for our thriving, our flourishing in him, through him. A reminder that like the Forest Frank song says, “Jesus, your way’s better”. Jesus is the giver of abundant life... he takes away the sin of the world so that we can live abundantly.

As we discern who we are in Christ, and how we minister to one another, if we truly love one another, we will desire that abundant life for one another. We will desire to see one another flourish.

There’s a song called ABUNDANTLY that I remember from my childhood... it was a favourite, but I’ve since realized that it is not widely known... but it speaks of all the things in nature that God has made and how they are expressions of God’s love.. and then it says... ***and this one God who made all these is interested in you and me... his greatest gift is to make us free... new self, more life ABUNDANTLY.***

May you discover the abundant goodness that Christ has for you as you grow in his love and discern his voice. And Lord Jesus... on this Vocations Sunday we pray for each person here in their ministry and particularly for those who have not found where they are called to serve in your church. May you guide us all to the abundant life you have for each and every one of us. **Amen.**

See Canon Calvert’s Address

Guild service St Marks

Sunday 26th April

Calvert Prentis

- What kind of church are we?
- What kind of church do we want to be?
- What kind of church should we be

Today’s readings give us a clear picture of what it means to be, grounded, and belonging to God. They are not abstract ideas. They speak of a way of living together, by following Jesus and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Notice something: the life Jesus offers is not found in isolation. We are not solitary creatures. We belong to a flock. We are the church. Together they recognize God’s voice.

This brings us straight to Acts. After Pentecost, the early believers didn’t just have a spiritual experience that would last a day and go home unchanged. They **continued** to devote *themselves*—to **teaching, fellowship,**

the **breaking of bread, and prayer and sharing** what they had. They met together on a regular basis to praise God and build each other up. And the result they became A **community that was alive, growing, and marked by joy and generosity.**

This is what it looks like when people actually follow the Shepherd's voice. As Individuals and a church.

But we should be honest: that sometimes that life isn't easy. It **sounds beautiful—and it is—but it requires sacrifice.** It requires patience. It requires enduring wrongs without lashing out.

When we know the voice of the Shepherd we confidently say "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Notice what the psalm does not say. It does not say we will avoid the dark valleys. In fact, it assumes they will come but we will walk through them. Because the psalm goes on to declare: *"I will fear no evil; for you are with me."*

So, when we hold both these readings together, a pattern emerges:

- In **Acts**, we see what happens when people follow the shepherds voice—community, generosity, shared life is birthed.
- In **Psalm 23**, we are given the deep assurance that we are never alone—not in green pastures, not in dark valleys.

The life described in Acts doesn't happen automatically. It happens when ordinary people choose, day after day, to listen for the directions from Jesus and to follow. But how do we do this? How can we tune our ears and heart to hear the God's voice leading us.

Well, the second chapter of Acts concludes with a breathtaking snapshot of the early church in Jerusalem. Coming immediately after the fire of Pentecost and Peter's powerful sermon, we see what happens when the Holy Spirit doesn't just visit a people, but dwells within them.

This passage isn't just a historical record; it is a blueprint for what a thriving, Christ-centered person and community looks like today.

1. The Four Pillars of Devotion

The text begins by noting that the believers "devoted themselves." This wasn't a casual interest; it was a steadfast commitment. They built their lives on four specific pillars:

- **The 1st Pillar**

The Apostles' Teaching: They were hungry for the Word. They didn't rely on personal feelings; they sought the truth about Jesus as revealed by those who walked with Him.

- **The 2nd pillar**

Fellowship (Koinonia): This is more than coffee and small talk. It is a deep, sacrificial sharing of life.

- **The 3rd pillar**

The Breaking of Bread: This refers both to shared meals and the Lord's Supper. They remembered Christ's sacrifice in the rhythm of their daily lives.

- **The 4th pillar**

Prayer: They recognized that a church without prayer is an empty room or house...

Church Noticeboard writing: 7 days without prayer makes One weak...

We lived in huge Victorian house in one of our former parishes. It had a faulty heating system, and we certainly felt it in the winter. I was forever running down in the basement to push the pilot light to ignite the boiler. Eventually it conked out and the engineer arrived. Upon completing the repair in the basement, he came up the radiators in every room, and he decided to start in my study. He looked around and saw the number of shelves with books and a busy desk of paperwork and knowing I was the only one in the house at

that time and knowing I was working in the room, he clasped his hands and said I guess this is where all the action takes place for the work of the church and before I could say 'actually no it does not' he clasped his hands and said well, let's get started as this is the engine room of the church.

I pondered that thought after he left and I found myself thinking that my office was not the engine room. The engine room of the church was the prayer meeting that was going to happen that evening. That's the place where there is power, when we met together and pray together to God to discern his will and ask for his equipping.

The text says, "awe came upon every soul." When God's people are truly devoted, the presence of the divine becomes tangible.

They didn't just say they loved each other; they proved it.

"And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as all had need." (Acts 2:44-45)

The Outcome: "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

When a community lives with such authenticity, joy, and generosity, it becomes magnetic. People are drawn to the light of Christ because they see it reflected in the lives of His followers.

The Challenge for Us:

- What kind of church do we want to become
- What kind of church should we be?

We should be a Guild and Church that is devoted, regular fellowship, Communion, and Prayer.

May we be a people who live so vividly for Christ that the world cannot help but take notice.

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Margaret Blanchette, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Tim, Audrey, Robert & Kalreeta, David, Rachel and for Angela, Kaia, Ms. Joell, Valerie (June) Johnstone and Hilda Warner. Also, for all and any others known to us.



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda> and/or
<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

Next Sunday

Sunday, **3rd May** – Fifth Sunday of Easter. We will hold our **Peaceful Worship at 8 am.** followed by our usual **Contemporary Worship at 9.30 am** both led by Fr. Terry. There will be Junior Church as usual.

Refreshments and Fellowship follow the service.

Coming Events

- **Life Group Startup** – The popular Life Groups have resumed but it **may not be too late** to get involved. Reach out to Steve or Cathy West if you would like to know more: cswestmd@logic.bm or cathjwest@gmail.com.
- **Table-top sale fundraiser for SMC! – Date to be confirmed.** – Message from Lisa-Dawn. Clear out your high-quality products that you are not using in your home, and kindly donate them to SMC for our table top sale. We will also need volunteers for the day! If you are donating clothes, please ensure that they have been washed, as some of the organizers are allergic to mold and dust. Thank you!!! More new to follow.
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 3rd May** in the Parish Hall.

- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be on **Saturday, 23rd May**.
- **Annual General Meeting** – St. Mark's Annual General Meeting will take place following our 9.30 service on **Sunday, 17th May**. (See discussion above.)

Those of you who generously donate to the church by way of Standing Order may wish to double-check that your orders have not passed their end-by date and expired. Of course, if they have, we would love you to re-instate them. 🙏

Down the Debt – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

End Stuff:

Here's a thought. It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

Direct deposits can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.

- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. "Grave 273 Peter Nash" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and "Donation" e.g. "Nash Donation" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

Use of the "Beneficiary" space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.

Posters follow:

Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!