

Suggested sermon outline for 21st April 2024

Readings for Easter 4 Yr B : Psalm 23, (1 John 3: 16-24,) John 10: 11-18.

Vocation Sunday

Annual event where the Church of England focuses on God's calling.

What comes to your mind when somebody says 'Vocation'? (Nurse, teacher, doctor?)

Reader or Ordained ministry?

Vocation and ministry is for all

God calls people to respond to his call in three dimensions.

1. General calling for every Christian to follow Jesus.
2. Then the call to develop our calling in our unique context. To seek to be a disciple at work and leisure, family life and in relationships. To learn to reflect on our understanding of God, gained by our knowledge and understanding of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit, in our context and to make a difference in that context.
3. Finally, for a few individuals, there may be a calling for a recognized ministry after training in a different context, discerned and facilitated by the church.

God for All

Our call in the Ecumenical County of Cumbria is for everyone to hear the call of Jesus.

To this end the Vocations and Ministry Team are always keen to support and encourage.

Every Christian can respond to God's call in their own lives by seeking to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd who knows us by name. To grow in faith and understanding of that unique call through meeting with other Christians, reading the Scriptures and prayer.

'Growing Disciples' is a course that provides support and encouragement to deepen our faith. It is running in two venues in the County this year.

Vocations and Ministry Team put on specific events to support those who want to explore whether God is calling them to new and different ministries. Events like the recent Young Vocations Day, Pioneer Ministry Days and Celebrating Vocations Days. Check the enews for updates.

The Good Shepherd.

Reflecting on today's reading The Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 provides all the sheep need to flourish. The sheep trust Him and good things are the result. We know it is in the heart of our Father God that his followers hear his voice and respond. That they come to know where the best life is to be found and that they can be a blessing to others.

In John's Gospel Jesus reflects that he, as shepherd, cares so deeply for the sheep that he is prepared to lay down his life for them. He is not like a hired hand who when things get tough cuts and runs. It costs for the shepherd to provide this opportunity. How can we fail to say,

'Yes Lord. I will go where you call me?'

'We know love by this, that the Son of God laid down his life for us- and we ought to lay down our lives for one another'. (1 John 3: 16)