

St Matthew's Anglican Church, Morrinsville

April 21st, 2024

Love Is A Verb

Website: stmatthewsmorrinsville.org.nz

Readings: Acts 4:5–12

Psalm 23

John 10:11–18

Sentence: Jesus said, 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep'. *John 10:11*

Collect: God of Love, we turn ourselves this day to the Good Shepherd as our inspiration and model for the sacrificial love for one another to which we are called. Fill us with the power of your name and embolden us in our acts of love. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR SUNDAY.

Acts 4:5–12

Question: What would stop you from proclaiming the name of Jesus?

Prayer: Jesus, the name that charms our fear, bring hope, peace, joy, and love to all.

Psalm 23

Question: What is your take on God, your Shepherd and King?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may we choose each day to live in your way, making our heart clean to love others as we are loved.

John 10:11–18

Question: Are you a true shepherd? Then what is your vocation?

Prayer: True Shepherd, make us your shepherds, so that we may be like you to the sheep in our care.

SPECIFIC PRAYERS FOR THIS WEEK

- We pray for reconciliation and peace in the Middle East instead of retaliation.
- We pray for our AGM next week, for willing people to be on vestry.
- We pray for those who are sick, especially Phil Dyer (David's brother), Lorna, and others we may know.
- Pray for all families mourning the death of a loved ones.

GIVE THANKS

- For the rain that nurtures our farms, crops, homes and gardens.
- For the governance role our vestry has performed over the past year.
- For the work done in the church renovating the kitchenette and toilets.

FOCUS

Power, name, love. These words weave through this week's texts, and their interrelationship presents a rich depiction of the saving work of the Divine amongst us. The name of Jesus Christ holds power. The power of Jesus resides in love. The love of God through Jesus exerts influence in us and over us. Our call is to love, to exercise our power in acts of love towards one another. The web continues to interweave and strengthen.

The opening four verses of the chapter set the scene for Acts 4:5–12 in which the prisoners, Peter and John, have been arrested and held in custody by temple officials as a result of their teaching and preaching about the Resurrection. Continuing his response, Peter reasserts the claim that has landed him in this interrogation, that the source of his power is the name of the resurrected Jesus Christ of Nazareth. To know, to call upon, to believe "the name" is a recurring theme in this week's texts: here in Acts 4, in Psalm 23:3, and in 1 John 3:23. Power to speak, power to act, power to be bold, power to follow, power to love: all are connected to a belief in the saving power of the name of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 23 is much-loved and undoubtedly one of the most well-known passages in the Bible. On this Good Shepherd Sunday, the image of God as shepherd inspires trust and confidence but does not deny the multiple, sustained threats to that security. Thus, we should take care that our familiarity with this psalm does not give way to sentimentality. In the psalm's culminating verse, the writer is daily pursued, no longer by enemies, but by God's goodness and steadfast, faithful love.

Love one another. Love sacrifices. Love attends to the economic realities of our siblings. Love moves boldly. Love shows obedience to God's way. This multi-layered love for one another has God's love as its source and its model. Its essence, however, is to be expressed outwardly in word, in deed, in action. Love is a verb.

Contrary to the power exerted by human structures, the power of the resurrected Jesus Christ resides in his saving love for humanity. The power of this love emboldens our acts of love in a world full of people who have been dis-empowered and ill-loved.

How can we, individually and communally, enact our love in service to those who have been systematically excluded and oppressed?

How does giving and receiving acts of love empower and embolden us, individually and communally?

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to live our lives in love to all, knowing that love is a verb and therefore a choice we make. Amen.

Next Sunday: 28th April 2024. AGM 10am

NO 8.30am

Wednesday 10am

Readings – Acts 8:26–40; Psalm 22:25–31; 1 John 4:7–21; John 15:1–8

28th Apr	Sides person Lee Family	Welcomer Diane	Data Rachael	MOW Lynnley	Bible Reader Jacky, Lynette	Prayers Lynnley	Chalice Roger	Morning Tea Rodney & Lynnley
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Our AGM will be next week on April 28th after the 10am service. Please consider carefully whom you would like to elect to these leadership roles. Nomination forms will be available at the back of the Church. Please could Janice have your reports as soon as possible –

janicegthorne@gmail.com

Vicar: Val Riches 078880878 or 0274448286, Lance 0275553286 Email val@wtanglican.nz