

SUNDAY 26 April 2026 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am

Introduction

Hymn - TIS 203 - Fairest Lord Jesus

**Fairest Lord Jesus, Lord of all creation,
Son of God, and Mary's son:
you will I cherish, you will I honour,
you are my soul's delight and crown.**

**Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands
robed in the greenness and bloom of spring:
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
he makes the saddest heart to sing.**

**Fair are the flowers, fairer still the children
in all the freshness of youth arrayed;
yet is their beauty fading and fleeting;
Lord Jesus, yours will never fade.**

**Fair is the moonlight, fairer still the sunshine,
fair is the shimmering starry sky:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines clearer
than all the heavenly host on high.**

**Jesus, all beauty, heavenly and earthly,
in you is wondrously found to be;
none can be nearer, fairer or dearer
than you, my Saviour, are to me.**

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sentence of the day

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." John 21:15

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your

strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Prayer of the Day

O God, our ruler and guide, in whose hands are the destinies of this and every nation, we give you thanks for the freedoms we enjoy in this land and for those who laid down their lives to defend them. We pray that we and all the people of Australia, gratefully remembering their courage and their sacrifice, may have grace to live in a spirit of justice, of generosity and of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NIV)

¹ These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalms 27:4-14 (NIV)

⁴ I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

⁵ **For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.**

⁶ Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

⁷ **Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.**

⁸ My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.

⁹ **Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.**

¹⁰ Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.

¹¹ **Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.**

¹² Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

¹³ **I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.**

¹⁴ **Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.**

Acts 20:26-35 (NIV)

²⁶ Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. ²⁷ For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. ²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

³² “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

John 21:15-25 (NIV)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord,

who is going to betray you?")²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

²² Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." ²³ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

This is the gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Video - Chaplain George Green

Sermon - John 21:15-25 Loving Jesus, Following Jesus, Feeding Jesus' Sheep

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: God of Peace, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn - TIS 272 - Come, thou long-expected Jesus

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,

now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

The Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you. He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you. He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust. Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us. Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

After Communion

Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.

The ANZAC Day Ode

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.

All: We will remember them.

Lest we forget.

All: Lest we forget.

The Last Post

1 Minute Silence

Rouse

Hymn - TIS 558 - All praise to thee, my God, this night

**All praise to thee, my God, this night
for all the blessings of the light:
keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
beneath thine own almighty wings.**

**Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
the ill that I this day have done,
that with the world,
myself, and thee
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.**

**O may my soul on thee repose,
and may sweet sleep my eyelids close
sleep that shall me
more vigorous make
to serve my God when I awake.**

**When in the night I sleepless lie,
my soul with heavenly thoughts supply;
let no ill dreams disturb my rest,**

no powers of darkness me molest.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures here below,
praise God above, you heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Notices

Dismissal

Go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint hearted. Support the weak. Help the afflicted. Honour every person. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, And may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip us with everything good that we may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight. And the blessing of the God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Sermon - Loving, Following, Feeding

Chaplain George Green video

Today I want to look at three ordinary people. People with their faults and their fears, but also their faith in Jesus Christ..

We have just seen a video about Chaplain George Green, an ordinary man who became an Australian Army chaplain and served unarmed at Gallipoli. He stayed for those around him to offer support and care and the love of Jesus in their greatest time of need.

But I also want to look at the apostles Peter and John from our gospel reading. They are also ordinary men, but they left everything to follow Jesus and to feed his sheep..

Let's start with Peter. Peter's brother Andrew heard John the Baptist refer to Jesus as the lamb of God. He found Peter (who was called Simon then) to follow Jesus. Jesus renamed Simon as Peter, and he was intimately involved in Jesus' earthly ministry, one of Jesus's inner circle along with Andrew, James and John. He witnessed many of Jesus's miracles (even when other disciples were sent out). He was present at Jesus' transfiguration, and was one of the first disciples to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. He even cut off the Roman soldier Malchus's ear in a vain attempt to stop Jesus being arrested and executed. Despite all this, before Jesus was executed, Peter really disappointed Jesus. Three times he denied even knowing Jesus and much of today's reading is Jesus reinstating Peter following those denials.

Peter's reinstatement followed a very deliberate process by Jesus. Three times, the same number of times Peter denied Jesus, he asked Peter "do you love me". Peter replied three times, with increasing frustration, "you know I love you": Jesus needed to be absolutely sure that Peter did love him with all his heart, that he had truly repented of his denial and had turned back to following Jesus.

It is interesting that the first time Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, he specifically asks him if he loves him more than these. He could be asking if he loves him more than the other disciples do, he could be asking him if he loves Jesus more than he loves the other disciples, or he could be asking if he loves Jesus more than he loves fishing and the fish. Each interpretation is grammatically possible, and it is probably the first, but he could be asking if he loves him more than

his fishing, his original career, and this is an important question for us too.

Peter passed the test of loving Jesus. Jesus, who knows our innermost hearts, knew that Peter was not only desperately sorry for denying him, he knew that Peter had completely put this sorry episode of his life behind him. In fact, in knowing all things, Jesus knew that no matter what, that Peter would never turn away from him again, he would never deny him again, even when his life was at stake, even when he was looking down the barrel of crucifixion. We do not know authoritatively, but according to early Christian tradition, the Apostle Peter was martyred by crucifixion in Rome during Emperor Nero's persecution, likely around 64-67 AD. Tradition holds that Peter requested to be crucified upside down, feeling unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord, Jesus Christ.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, Peter was one of the primary leaders of the early church. He preached on the day of Pentecost when 3000 people became believers. Peter was also instrumental in gentiles being accepted into the church without undergoing the rituals associated with becoming Jewish. Peter was jailed and miraculously released. Peter also performed miracles and contributed to writing the New Testament, writing two letters and likely providing much information to Mark's gospel.

Peter's life demonstrated a transformation from a flawed, impulsive fisherman to a courageous, foundational leader of the church. His story highlights faith, repentance, and the power of God's grace, and serves as an enduring model for our spiritual growth and leadership in the church.

John the Apostle paralleled Peter in many ways, His brother James also was an apostle, and he was also a fisherman. Jesus also gave them a new name, Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder (so you might say Simon became Rocky and John and James became Thunderbolt!) John, like Peter, was also impulsive. He and his brother asked Jesus if they could sit at Jesus's right and left hands when he got to heaven, and that didn't half annoy the other disciples. Nevertheless, Jesus asked them "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" and they impulsively said they could. Again, Jesus, knowing all things, said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with." John

was to suffer in following Jesus, being jailed in Acts and traditionally surviving being boiled in boiling oil..

Another significant event in John's life happened at Jesus's crucifixion. Jesus saw his mother at the cross, and the disciple we assume is John standing nearby. Jesus said to his mother "Woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, John took Mary into his own home.

John also wrote a lot of the New Testament, the gospel of John, three letters and the Book of Revelation.

It is thought that John was the only apostle to die of natural causes, living to an old age on the island of Patmos, where he wrote Revelation. His life is remembered for his theological insights, his emphasis on love as a central Christian principle, and his writings continue to strongly influence Christian thought.

Now I'd like to get back to Chaplain George Green. Green kept a detailed diary of his time at Gallipoli, and in eloquent and honest prose he vividly described the horrors of the campaign. In the dust and heat and flies he tended the flock Jesus gave him, providing what pastoral care he could. One of his most important and distressing tasks was burying the dead. He wrote,

"I remember registering the resolve to be studiously callous about funerals otherwise it was obvious I would not last another week... I was among the burial party to go over into territory between the trenches. There I beheld a sight I never shall forget and struck a smell awful beyond anything I've ever experienced...I said committal over about fifteen bodies most of whom were decayed beyond recognition."

In his dugout, Green was just as susceptible to sickness, lice and shrapnel fire as his comrades in the front trenches. He suffered his share of discomfort and illness. In November 1915 he was admitted to the 19th General Hospital in Alexandria, Egypt, with enteritis, and in December he was described as being "dangerously ill". He was sent home to Australia on the ship *Suffolk* on 29 January 1916 for recuperation and rest. He died in England in 1956 after serving in chaplaincy until 1919 and parish ministry in Melbourne..

What is common about these three people? As Peter was asked when Jesus reinstated him - they all loved Jesus. All three followed Jesus

- like Peter, and many of us, perhaps not unwaveringly, perhaps wandering from the path for periods, but fully committed to Jesus in suffering, trials and persecution. Each of these people took seriously the call to feed or care for Jesus's sheep, the people that God put them among.

Jesus also asks us if we love him, and if our answer is yes, then to follow him and to care for his sheep.

Christians, those who love Jesus, are all called to different ministries. Peter's ministry was not John's ministry, was not George Green's ministry. It is not your ministry. George was called to parish ministry and military chaplaincy, as I have been, although I have not been called (or not as yet) called to chaplaincy in battle fields as George was. You have been called to those that God has put you amongst - your family, your church family, your neighbours and friends. Some of you are called to the disadvantaged around us, or to the ill, the hospitalised, those in old age facilities or the bereaved. Some of you are called to workplace ministries, to places of learning, to school, college and university campus ministry. Some to jails and places of incarceration. Some of us have a variety of ministries, or are still discerning where God has called you.

But in performing these ministries, we should be sure, as Jesus became sure with Peter, and John and George Green were sure, that you love Jesus, that you are following him, and that with the strength of the Holy Spirit, you are feeding and caring for his sheep, despite the suffering, the struggles and the persecutions you will experience, as they did.

Do you love Jesus? Do you follow him? Do you tend his sheep?