

As we negotiate the restrictions and health concerns that COVID 19 have brought to life, it seems that there are a never ending chorus of voices sprouting false information, promoting conspiracy theories, or just unscrupulous people using peoples fears to promote their own agendas.

Who are you listening too?

Jesus is our good shepherd because he not only leads us where we need to go but has walked the path before us; in his concern for justice for the poor, looking out for the rights and needs of society's most vulnerable, in breaking down the barriers that cause strife and division between people.

Every Christian is called to be a shepherd, to mirror Jesus' way of being in the world, be it of their family, their friends, wherever their sphere of influence is.

Where is your sphere of influence? And how can you mirror Jesus' way of being to those people? Spend a short time reflecting on these questions, ask God to reveal what it is he needs you to be.

The Lord be with you.



### Prayer Requests

- Peter, Summer, Helen, Lorna, Debbie, Kaye, the vulnerable in our parish, and their families.
- Those affected by COVID 19, especially the sick and dying
- Those worried about loved ones in COVID 19 hotspots.
- Governments and WHO as they discern the way forward.
- Local Healthcare workers and Businesses.



## *Anglican Parish of the Otways Newsletter*

### **The Season of Easter**

3rd May, 2020

**Priest in Charge — Rev'd Jenny Brandon**

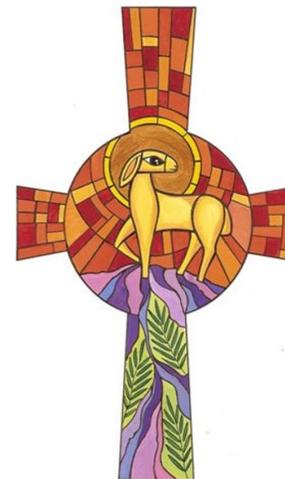
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**Anglican Parish of the  
Otways**

Greetings in the name of Jesus.

Haven't we been enjoying some lovely weather, although by the time you read this we may well be in the grips of storms and rain again. The nice weather encourage Richard and I outdoors and to do some much needed maintenance on our bonsais, a hobby that has been much neglected for over ten years when our move to the territory meant having to part with our much loved plants. We now have a crop of young plants we are encouraging into a different way of being.

How appropriate, to reflect on the pruning, shaping and upheaval our much loved little plants go through to be the beautiful specimens we hope they will become. This time of restriction and change is a time where we can stop and allow God to prune and shape our very being so that we can be the people he wants us to be. Sometimes that will mean upheaval, like when I must savagely prune wayward root systems, something I still feel unsettled about doing, but if I don't, the plants become pot bound and die. The same is true for us. Sometimes God allows us to endure difficulties so that the waywardness in our lives can be pruned away and we can grow in our spiritual health.

Just be sure its your Heavenly Father doing the pruning. There is so much false information and conspiracy theories circulating amid the pandemic crisis, and many people using the crisis to push their own agendas, it can be hard to know what to believe. So what can we do? Firstly we need to limit ourselves to listening to trusted news sources only. Secondly, remember anyone can post anything on social media, truth or facts have no bearing on what people can post. It is the joy of living in a society that values freedom of speech, and while it is a something I value, it does mean people can propagate the most ridiculous ideas. Finally remember, we are called to be wise. (Eph 5:16) As a parishioner said to me just the other day, "When things are dim we need to help each other to turn back to Christ centeredness where all truth lies." And that is truth.

May the guidance of God's Word and the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life continue to make you wise in your discernment between truth and lies.

Blessings Jenny.

## The Lighter Side of Life



## Prayer of the Week

God of all power,  
you called from death our  
Lord Jesus, the great  
shepherd of the sheep:  
send us as shepherds to  
rescue the lost,  
to heal the injured,  
and to feed one another  
with understanding;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

Reading.     **Read John 10.1-10**

## Reflection

Our reading offers us the familiar picture of the Good Shepherd of the flock. It is one of the seven "I am" sayings in John, in which Jesus reveals his identity to his followers; that he is the Bread of Life (6:35), Light of the world (8:12), the Gate (10:9), Resurrection and Life (11:25), Way, Truth and Life (14:6), and True Vine (15:1). They cover the spectrum of human need nourishment, light, security, direction and life, and reflect the provision God sends to us. In our current environment of social distancing, we need to focus on that provision and comfort more than ever.