



A shepherd awaits

Introduction

A shepherd is waiting for the call, resting on a hillside, sitting in the city, looking toward the sky, listening in the roar of the ocean, sensing the hum of all nature.

Collect

O God our Ruler, in every age thou hast called men and women to serve thy Church and shepherd thy people. Bless, we pray thee, this our diocese of Oxford: that in seeking a new bishop, we may hear thy voice and listen to the needs of thy people; and that through this process, the good news of thy gospel may be made known; through thy Son, Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of thy sheep. Amen

A Reading

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

John 10:11-18

A Hymn

Should God call a shepherd who could lead us,
may they be full of Christ-like love and light.
So they can lead us faithfully to Canaan,
revealing God's transforming power and might.
And may they show a never- ending kingdom,
a place where we can meet our Lord today.
And move us gently on towards our purpose,
Taking the time to guide us on our way.

Could we seek a servant who is giving,
Arms open wide, yet clasping hands in prayer.
Sharing the joy of all that's in creation,
Bringing to us their story of God's care.
So, when they sing it may be words of wisdom,
And when they pray it may be full of grace.
So when we gather for our celebrations,
God's spirit may be present in each place.

Would God send the one whom we are seeking,
Willing to walk alongside you and me.
Who ministers so deeply and profoundly,
preaches the gospel that can set us free.
Then we can worship once again together,
led by the soul that God has sent anew.
So they can teach us how to listen truly,
and trust our hearts in everything we do.

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Tune: Londonderry Air (Danny Boy)*

Set Prayers

We pray for this diocese of Oxford at this time of change,
We remember Steven our bishop, thanking God for all he has done in his ministry here as he prepares for retirement. For bishop Gavin, bishop of Dorchester, who will take up new responsibilities as acting diocesan bishop. For all souls across our diocese waiting in preparation.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for the consultation process,
for appointment secretaries, for those called to the CNC.
For inspiration, careful listening and kind words

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

For our community here, for all the communities of the diocese of Oxford,
and for all the people who live, work and worship here.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

A brief time of silence



A Calling out

This is an opportunity to pray about what's on your heart and in your mind. This can be a single word or statement that you would like to see in your new bishop, or a longer prayer. This can be done silently or out loud. Call out our needs and our hopes. Tell God our fears and our desires. Ask God to bring us hope.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen

Conclusion

Almighty God, giver of every good gift:
look graciously on your Church and illuminate our path as we seek a new Bishop.
Help us to work together for the good of your kingdom and all who live, work and study in the Diocese of Oxford.
Give wisdom and listening hearts to those who have influence.
Send out your Holy Spirit to call one who will faithfully teach, pastor, care for and equip us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Diocesan Prayer
Revd Canon Geoff Bayliss

I have called you by your name; you are mine.

Isaiah 43.1