FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

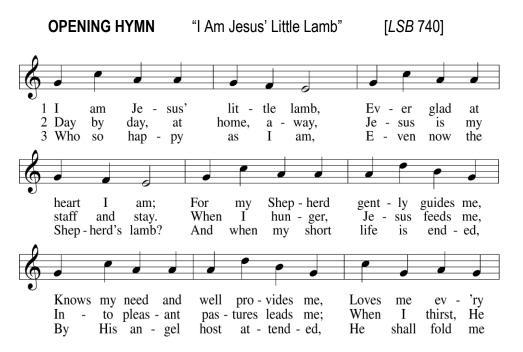
Our Good Shepherd April 25, 2021

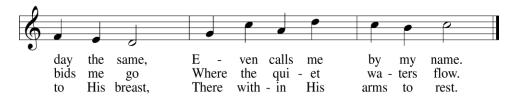


AS WE GATHER: Of all the animals that could have been used to portray humanity, does it feel strange to be called a sheep? After all, it is not the most honorable creature. There are no defense mechanisms to escape a predator, no intimidating roar, and limited ability to

fend for one's self when it comes to seeking nourishment, water, and safety. Yet these things reveal the point we are called to understand. It may not be good to be a sheep on our own, but it is great to be a sheep with a Good Shepherd to care for the flock. Jesus is our perfect shepherd who protects and defends, feeds and nourishes, leads and provides all we need in this body and life. Together as His flock, we are blessed to follow Him as by His Word and Means of Grace He leads us to streams of living water and paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

₩ PREPARATION **₩**





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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the

■ Son and of the

Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES 1 John 3:16a, 24; John 10:11, adapted

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor: By this we know love,

People: that He laid down His life for us.

Pastor: "I am the good shepherd," says the Lord.

People: The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Pastor: Whoever keeps His commandments abides in God, and

God in him.

People: And by this we know that He abides in us, by the

Spirit whom He has given us.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION Psalm 23; John 10:11

Pastor: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes

me lie down in green pastures.

People: Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd, we confess to You

that we have been ungrateful for all You give us to sustain our bodies and lives. Forgive us, Good

Shepherd.

Pastor: He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He

leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

People: Like sheep, we are distracted and tend to wander

and scatter. We forget who we are as baptized children of God and fail to respond to Your shepherding in our lives. Forgive us, Good

Shepherd.

Pastor: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod

and Your staff, they comfort me.

People: We confess that in difficult times of life, we

sometimes struggle to be confident in Your presence and protection, seeking to find our own

comfort. Forgive us, Good Shepherd.

Pastor: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my

enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

forever.

People: As we journey through this sinful world, we overlook

the goodness and mercy that flow into our lives from

You. Forgive us, Good Shepherd.

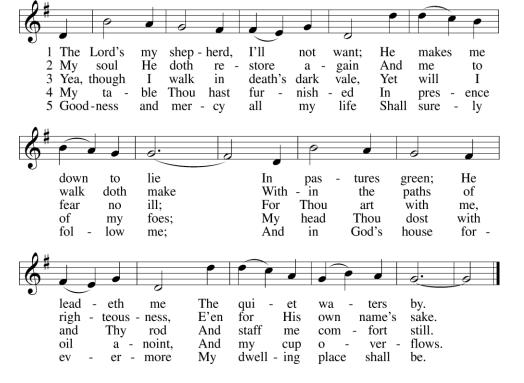
Pastor: Jesus, our Good Shepherd, hears our cries and says to

us, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." Receive the forgiveness won for You through Christ's laying down His life and rising from death in victory. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the 🗷 Son

and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

HYMN OF PRAISE "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want" [LSB 710]



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₩ WORD ₩

INTROIT Psalm 23; antiphon: John 10:14, 15b

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, and I lay down my life for the sheep. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it

was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

KYRIE Lord, Have Mercy

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Risen Lord, You are the Good Shepherd

who lays down His life for the sheep. They are Yours, and nothing will snatch them from Your hand. In the love You've shown and the perfect love we know through Your Spirit, empower Your flock to reach others, that all may be guided by Your shepherding grace; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God,

now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 4:1–12 (Peter and John witness before the council.)

4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. ⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes

together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the gathered high and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the highpriestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE 1 John 3:16–24 (Love one another.)

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰ for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God,@ and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL John 10:11–18 (Jesus the Good Shepherd)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the tenth

chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

(The Gospel is read.)

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

CATECHISM Explanation of the First Article

Pastor: Shepherds provide for all the needs of their flock. Out of

His love, our creating God provides not only for our spiritual needs of faith and forgiveness, but also for all that we need for our physical, emotional, and social well-being. Believing in God the Father as creator of all is the focus of the Small Catechism's explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, which we confess

together:

People: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of

heaven and earth.

Pastor: What does this mean?

People: I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses,

and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

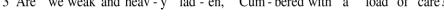
He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

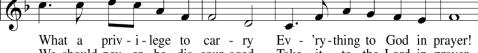
This is most certainly true.

SERMON HYMN "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" [LSB 770]

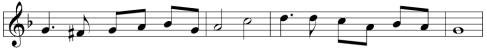


3 Are we weak and heav - y lad - en, Cum - bered with a load of care?





We should never be dis-cour-aged— Take it to the Lord in prayer. Pre-cious Sav-ior, still our ref-uge— Take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; Oh, what need-less pain we bear—Can we find a friend so faith - ful Who will all our sor-rows share? Do thy friends de-spise, for-sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



All be-cause we do not car - ry Ev - 'ry-thing to God in prayer! Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak-ness—Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a sol-ace there.

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SERMON Jesus, Our True Shepherd - John 10:11-18

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus

and for all people according to their needs.

You are the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for us out of love. Help us to hear Your voice, follow where You lead, and receive what You provide through Your

grace and mercy; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the times we fear our enemies and the powers

against us, remind us that we belong to You and no one can snatch us from Your hand. We bring before the Lord the part of Your flock here in this place and others whom we love in their time of need, [especially . . .]. Carry them as lambs in a shepherd's arms through the difficult paths ahead. Give all wisdom to know the faithful path we are to take, and shepherd us through every trial, trouble, and

temptation; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Additional petitions may follow.

Pastor: Give us courage that we not live in captivity to our fears;

guide those who lead us in this and every land; provide peace, justice, and freedom for people everywhere. In

our busy days, give us time to reflect upon the goodness of God and to experience joy in the security and peace You provide us, that we find contentment and peace in You; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Protect and defend the members of our armed forces

and the public workers who keep our communities safe. Defend us from our enemies, and teach us to rely on Your provision, the true protector of us all; let us pray to

the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we do not forget those in need but share with all

the Lord has entrusted to us and to display the kind of love shown and known that has no end; let us pray to

the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we recall the saints of old, who put their trust in the

Lord, that we also be found faithful when He returns in

glory; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That as we gather at the Table of the communion of

saints for the forgiveness of sins, having faith to receive His gifts for the nourishment of our lives of faith now and

to the life that is to come; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves and all

for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Your

Son, the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER Matthew 6:9–13

People: 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 and the power and the glory forever and

ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION 1 John 3:16a; John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20;

Numbers 6:24–26

Pastor: By this we know love,

People: that He laid down His life for us.

Pastor: "I am the good shepherd," says the Lord.

People: The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Pastor: Now may the God of peace who brought again from the

dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ,

to whom be glory forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious

to you.

peace.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

CLOSING HYMN "O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe" [LSB 666]



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