

## Augustana

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

EASTER 4, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

Welcome to Augustana – where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together. I would like to acknowledge we gather on Treaty six territory and the homeland of many people of the Metis Nation. You are welcome to worship with us. We aim to share the unconditional love of God with people of all genders, orientations, abilities, ages, colours, cultures, or ethnicities. This is a work in progress and you are welcome to join us on our way.

### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**ALL: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

**ALL: Make us one, risen Christ.**

**Cleanse our hearts.**

**Shower us with life.**

**To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God now and forever. AMEN.**

HYMN: Glory to God in the Highest # 164

Leader: Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!

**ALL: Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!**

Leader: To God be glory forever!

**ALL: To God be glory forever!**

Leader: Alleluia! Amen!

**ALL: Alleluia! Amen! X7**

### CHILDREN'S TIME

- Sheep – I don't really know a lot about sheep. You might not either
- But I have a dog that looks like a little sheep ... and when you have an animal in your life it means responsibility: they need to be fed and watered, you got to clean up after them, some of the stuff you have to do is fun ... and some of it (the cleaning up part) is not so much fun
- Sophie and the chocolate bunny ....
- When it was all over ... she went looking for the rest of the bunny that she didn't get to finish. She's not too bright our Sophie, but we love her.

- So when Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd” that’s kind of what he means ... that God is with us through thick and thin ... when we make mistakes (like Sophie and chocolate) ... and when we need to know that we are not alone.

Prayer: O God, you are the good shepherd, send us out as shepherds to seek the lost, to heal the injured and to care with grace and compassion; through Jesus, who calls each of us by name. **Amen.**

Choir Anthem “Savior, like a shepherd lead us”

**Scripture reading: 1 John 3:16-24**

<sup>16</sup> We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup> How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup> And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup> and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup> All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Word of God, Word of life

ALLELUIA

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** - The Holy Gospel according to the Gospel of John 10:11-18 Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own 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 do not belong to this fold. I must bring

them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

The Gospel of our Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ**

### **Meditation –**

The readings from this Sunday always take me back to my late teens.

- As a young adult I had a wonderful pastor. He was an amazing preacher – he wrote finely crafted sermons. They were sermons that you had to listen to very intently or you might miss an important point. He challenged us to live out our faith ... “that’s where the rubber hits the road.” Was a favorite phrase of his. He was tough on lukewarm responses.
- But one weekend I attended a retreat and on Sunday we had a very different kind of sermon. The readings were the same as today’s. The pastor spoke very simply about Jesus, the good shepherd, who loves his flock and lays down his life for them. That simple message touched my heart.
- One pastor goading us with a stick like we were a bunch of witless sheep and another pastor encouraging us along with a warmth and comfort that made us want to care for others. Two very different approaches. [PAUSE]
- As I said earlier, I don’t really know much about sheep or shepherding. But I do know that being a shepherd is not a choice occupation – not a career path you want your children to take... it never has been really.
- Joseph of “the coat of many colours” pointed out that “All shepherds are abhorrent to the people of Egypt” and because of this the Hebrews were allowed to settle on land separate from the Egyptian population and its influence.
- King David as a young boy was considered the least of the lot and was sent out with the flocks.
- Sheep were an important part of the economy, but those who cared for them were under-valued. Shepherds were cheap labour. And so some of them did a poor job having an attitude, “Nobody cares what I do, so what does it matter” They did not take any risks that were above their pay grade.
- Jesus was the Good Shepherd who cared ... who cared way above his pay grade.
- The good shepherd who both **showed** us how to love and **commanded** us to love one another. How to be care givers
- One of people who regularly helps to care for my mother is a personal care worker. Like a shepherd she is not paid well ... and there is little prestige in her job. But she faithfully shows up and has even taken on extra shifts during the pandemic when co-workers

were sick or had to isolate. She has altered her life to protect those she cares for: she no longer goes to the store – sending her husband out to do all the shopping because she does not want to put any of her clients at risk. She is definitely caring above her pay grade.

- I don't know about her faith ... I don't know her at all ... never met her. But it seems to me that she follows the example of the Good Shepherd ... loves in word and deed.
- There are so many people working ... shepherding ... above their pay grade these days: in addition to personal care workers there are cleaners & janitors, postal workers, cashiers, grocers, emergency workers, school staff, and more that I have forgotten to name – because it is all too easy to forget them even when we depend on the support their work provides.
- These are people who have heard the voice of the Good shepherd ... and willingly and sometimes unwillingly they have answered the voice by their actions.
- Back to the story of two pastors
- One pastor pushing us along and the other pastor encouraging us along. Which was the better approach ... which one helped us be faithful followers of Jesus? The only answer to that is “yes.” Because both shepherded us along using the gifts God gave them.
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- The challenge & the comfort: and we will be reassured “whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts,”

### **Hymn** “Shepherd me, O God” # 780

Refrain:

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants,  
beyond my fears, from death into life.

1 God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,  
I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,  
I walk by the quiet waters of peace. [Refrain]

2 Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,  
you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,  
my spirit shall sing the music of your name. [Refrain]

3 Though I should wander the valley of death,  
I fear no evil, for you are at my side,  
your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. [Refrain]

4 You have set me a banquet of love  
in the face of hatred,  
crowning me with love beyond my power to hold. [Refrain]

5 Surely your kindness and mercy  
follow me all the days of my life;  
I will dwell in the house of my God forevermore. [Refrain]

### **Prayers**

Let us join hearts and voices together in prayer. Each short prayer will end with the words, “hear us, O God” and you can make the prayer your own by responding “Your mercy is great.” Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

*A brief silence.*

Loving Shepherd, you know your own and your own know you. Your voice calls us to your loving embrace. Strengthen your church throughout the world that we bear witness to your expansive love. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious Shepherd, you are generous with the gifts of goodness and mercy. Restore your creation to wholeness so that cities and towns, countryside and wilderness, may abound with life. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Hope-giving Shepherd, the nations and peoples are your heritage. Place into the hearts of all leaders and rulers the passion to serve. Give hope to the Alhamad-Wahid and Iqbal families as they await news of a safe haven. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Saving Shepherd, you hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Be close to the hearts of the lonely. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness, especially: Angie, Tewodros and family, Earl, Audrey, Orville and Carol, Bruce, Marie, Gloria, Anna Marie, Marcus, Brodie, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Shelby, Alice, Deanna, Ron, Marlene, Mildred, Minnie, Louise, Lyssa, Karen, and all those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts .....*(a pause to offer time to name others)*.

Give them courage and peace in the face of illness and grief. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding Shepherd, help our community in our life together and give us vigor as a people of faith. In the midst of the challenges and opportunities of our times, fill us anew with your Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal Shepherd, you hold us securely in your loving hands. We remember especially Elsie Stephan and Edna Soule. Comfort their families and assure all your children of the peace you have promised, that we may join them in everlasting life. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Pastor Marilyn: knowing that God loves us as a mother and father we pray in the words Jesus taught us:

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 forever. AMEN.

### **Easter Blessing & Dismissal**

May the one who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Christ is risen, just as he said. Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

### **Hymn** "Jesus Loves Me" # 595

1 Jesus loves me! this I know,  
for the Bible tells me so;  
little ones to him belong,  
they are weak, but he is strong.

Refrain:

Yes, Jesus loves me,  
yes, Jesus loves me,  
yes, Jesus loves me,  
the Bible tells me so.

2 Jesus loves me! he who died  
heaven's gates to open wide;  
he will wash away my sin,  
let his little child come in. [Refrain]

3 Jesus loves me! he will stay  
close beside me all the way;  
when at last I come to die,  
he will take me home on high. [Refrain]

### **THANK YOU'S**

Worship Assistant: Chris Martin

Musicians: Mik Bickis, Deborah Buck, Augustana St. Timothy Choir

Technicians: Gregory Fowlie-Neufeld, Bryan Tastad