

AUGUSTANA

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

EASTER 4 Good Shepherd Sunday May 3, 2020

WOV Service of Word & Prayer

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

GATHERING SONG “The Lord’s My Shepherd” # 778

The Lord's my shepherd; I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.
He leadeth me, he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me, and thy rod
and staff me comfort still;
for thou art with me, and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be;
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be.

GREETING

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

CHILDREN’S TIME

I met with some our congregation’s kids on Wednesday in the virtual world. It was so good to see their faces and hear their voices. I always appreciate their insight when we have a children’s time at church and so I asked them what they thought about sheep and shepherds. As it turns out – like most of us -- none of them have any experience with sheep and shepherds. But they do have experience taking care of animals: some

have responsibilities taking care of cows and some have dogs. So I asked them about that. What's important about caring for your animals. First of all you have to make sure that they have food and water ... you have to protect them ... and you have to clean up the poop. Some parts of caregiving are more pleasant than other parts. But it's all important ... it all has to be done ... everyday ... day after day. If you stop your animal will die. And then I asked them "Who does the shepherd job now?" and they answered "parents, pastors" and then someone said "Everyone!" and there was agreement on that. Everyone is called to be a shepherd – a caregiver. So we are all called to be shepherds – caregivers – to feed & water, to protect, and to clean up the messes. Everyday, day after day. Those kids are good theologians. They echoed what Jesus said to his disciples: This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Be a shepherd, just like I am the Good Shepherd.

SCRIPTURE SONG

Refrain: Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe
 Just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.
 Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name? /refrain

For you alone are the Holy One.
 All nations will draw near and worship before you,
 For your just and holy works have been revealed. /refrain

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: Holy Shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security. This we ask in the name of the Good Shepherd who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 23

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 right paths
 for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I 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
 my whole life long.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!
 Word of life Jesus Christ, all praise to you!
 Our hearts burn within us while you open to us the Scriptures.
 Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!
 Word of life, Jesus Christ, all praise to you!

GOSPEL: The Holy Gospel according to St. John chapter 10 (1-10) Glory to you, O Lord

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me

will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Praise to you, O Christ

MEDITATION

We have two images of Jesus today: “Jesus, the Good Shepherd.” And “Jesus, the gate.” The first one I find very comforting. The second I find less comfortable. Jesus as a gate. That makes me think of gatekeepers ... and that is a troubling image.

When I think of gatekeepers it brings to mind the people who are into quality control. And in the church they are the ones who find ways to tell people they aren't welcome ... that they don't fit in. you're too loud, you're too quiet; you're too conservative, you're too liberal; you're too gay, you're too straight; you're too strict, you're too loose, you're too weird, you're too boring. You don't dress right, you're the wrong colour, you talk funny, you don't bring the right kind of dish to the potluck, you make the coffee too weak or you make the coffee too strong. And so on and so ... some of these things trivial and some more hurtful. And I know that our gatekeepers almost always have their heart in the right place and that they mean well. And I know that people shouldn't be so sensitive. But I know too many people who have walked away from their church community because of the hurtful, unthinking, words of gatekeepers ... even well meaning gatekeepers.

So when I hear Jesus calling himself a gate I am uncomfortable. And maybe I am uncomfortable because of the gatekeeper in my own head who hears herself echoing some of the sentiments I was just listing.

But I'm not the gatekeeper ... nor are you the gatekeeper. Thank God for that! Jesus says, “I am the gate.”

The religious leaders of the New Testament times did not think very highly of Jesus' abilities as a gatekeeper: he ate with the wrong people, he talked to women, he touched the diseased, he associated with the outcasts, he taught the uneducated, and so on and so on. Jesus is a gatekeeper of a completely different quality. And sometimes that is pretty uncomfortable too. Sometimes I think Jesus goes a bit too far

for us and it stretches us to the limit. But what if Jesus is the gatekeeper that says “ally, ally, in come free”?

The false leaders – they are the ones who proclaim another way in ... the false gatekeepers who put all sorts of conditions on believers. These are the ones that Jesus warns us about: Jesus the true gate and gate keeper.

There is a hymn in the Anglican hymnbook that expresses this much better than I can. It describes Jesus as the still point which is another way to speak of Jesus as the gate.

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.
Let this be our song: no one stands alone.
Standing side by side, draw the circle, draw the circle wide...

God the still-point of the circle
Round you all creation turns
Nothing lost but held forever
in God's gracious arms

Gordon Light – Anglican hymnbook # 418

Amen.

SONG “You Satisfy the Hungry Heart” # 484

Refrain: You satisfy the hungry heart
With gift of finest wheat
Come give to us, O saving Lord
The bread of life to eat

As when the shepherd calls his sheep
They know and heed his voice
So when you call your family Lord
They follow and rejoice /refrain

You give yourself to us, O Lord,
Then selfless let us be,
To serve each other in Your name
In truth and charity.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

- Prayer of Confession

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another. Gracious God, have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Forgive us when we have tried to be the gatekeeper. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GOD'S RESPONSE TO US

Hear then God's response: God who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **AMEN.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each short prayer will end with the words "Lord in your mercy." You can make the prayer your own by responding "**hear our prayer.**"

As God's people called to love one another, let us pray for the needs of the church, the human family, and all the world.

We give thanks for the communion of faith that goes beyond the walls of our church building, for the love of God that is embodied in our risen savior Jesus and for all gifts of healing and forgiveness, especially we thank you for those who use their gifts to help us through this pandemic: medical staff, caregivers, cleaners, grocery workers, truckers, and all those who work in essential services. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We give thanks for the gift of relationship with others. During this time of physical distancing help us find ways to support and care for one another. Thank you for those whose technical abilities help us maintain our sense of community. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We give thanks for all who strive to save the earth from carelessness and destruction. Let us not be distracted by our current crisis from the work that is needed to keep our world healthy. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray for those who govern during challenging times and for all people in countries ravaged by strife & warfare hunger & illness. For all who are most vulnerable during this pandemic: refugees, the Iqbal and Alhamad/Wahid families; people living in poverty or

crowded conditions, the elderly, those who already struggle with health issues, and those who are incarcerated. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray for the people of Fort McMurray dealing with flooding, especially for those left homeless. Give them shepherds to care for them. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

We pray for families challenged to live and learn in new ways. Grant patience and humor to parents and children. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray for all who grieve: the Stauffer family as they grieve the loss of Mark's mom Muriel, for Paul Weatherington and his family on the death of his father Ron and for the many who mourn those who were murdered in Nova Scotia and for the families and friends of the members of the Armed Forces who were lost in the helicopter crash. Give comfort and strength for the days ahead and, when the time is right, remind all who grieve of the hope we have in the resurrection. Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray for all who call upon your healing name. Walk with all who are hungry, friendless, despairing, and those in need of healing in body and spirit especially: Jennie, Logan, William, Marcus, Brody, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Earl, Janet, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Inger, Deanna, Carol, Wilma, Mary, Georgina, and all who we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need as we journey on, grant us, O God. We ask this for the sake of Christ who died and rose again, and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

Knowing how God loves us as a Mother and Father we pray in the words Jesus taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy,
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. AMEN.

SENDING SONG "A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!" # 393

A hymn of glory let us sing;
New hymns throughout the world shall ring:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ, by a road before untrod,
ascends unto the throne of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

O risen Christ ascended Lord,
All praise to you let earth accord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
You are, while endless ages run,
with Father and with Spirit one.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Go in Peace to love and serve our risen Lord. Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!