

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



## He Cares

April 21, 2024

### AS WE GATHER

Flocks of sheep can number in the hundreds or even thousands. An annual trek from winter quarters to summer pastures and back again at a location in rural Idaho consistently draws hundreds of spectators to a location where the sheep must cross a major highway to reach their destination. Keeping track of two or three thousand sheep on the move is quite a task! Jesus, our Good Shepherd, knows how to care for not just thousands but millions of His sheeplike people. The prophet Isaiah says of the Lord God that He “will tend His flock like a shepherd” (40:11). Assured and reassured that we are part of His flock, we travel through life following the guidance of our caring Shepherd!

✘ **Welcome and Announcements** ✘

**HYMN**            8:00 AM "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us" 711  
                      11:00 AM "Children of the Heavenly Father" 725

## **INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:**            **Amen.**

**OPENING SENTENCES**    *John 12:26; Ephesians 4:15; Psalm 25:1–3, 5, 10;*  
*106:48*

Pastor: Jesus said: "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

**People:**            **Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.**

Pastor: To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust.

**People:**            **Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame.**

Pastor: Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation.

**People:**            **All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.**

Pastor: Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!

**People:**            **And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD!**

Pastor: Let us humble ourselves before God, confess our sins to Him, and pray for His gracious forgiveness.

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.

**People:**            **O Lord God Almighty, we confess that we are sinful human beings by nature and by deed. We have not put You first at all times. We have not followed in the ways You have set forth for us. We have not always been thoughtful caretakers of Your creation and have not shared its bounty on all occasions. We have not kept our thoughts, words, and deeds fully pure and honorable. We have sinned in ways we know and in ways we do not even recognize. We have not honored those in authority and have not without reservation encouraged them. We have not completely put**

**the best construction on all things and on all people. Have mercy on us, O Lord. Forgive us all our sins, and finally by Your grace, bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

Pastor: The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all our sins. 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.**

*(Share the Peace of Christ with those around you)*

**HYMN OF PRAISE** Christ the Lord Is Ris'n Today 463

## **SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**FIRST READING** Acts 4:1–12 (Peter and John are brought before the Jerusalem Council.)

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

On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Anas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if was re being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 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.**

**PSALM** *Psalms 23*

**People: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

*Men: He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.*

*Women: He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.*

**People: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

*Men: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Women: 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: 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.**

**EPISTLE**    *1 John 3:16–24*    (Followers of Christ are called to love in deed and in truth.)

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 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? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 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.**

**VERSE**            *Romans 6:9; John 10:14*

Pastor: Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.

**People:**            **Alleluia. I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me. Alleluia.**

**HOLY GOSPEL**    *John 10:11–18*    (*Jesus prays for and about His disciples.*)

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

**People:**            **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing 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. 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.

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may 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 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.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** 8:00 AM “The King of Love My Shepherd Is” 709

11:00 AM “The Lord’s My Shepherd I’ll Not Want” 710  
(tune: “Amazing Grace”)

**SERMON** “He Cares” John 10:11-18

**CREED** *The First Article from the Small Catechism and its explanation*

Pastor: As our Good Shepherd leads us, even so our heavenly Father hears the prayers of His people. Assured of His fatherly care, let us speak together the words of the Apostles’ Creed regarding the First Person of the Holy Trinity.

**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.**

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: In peace, let us pray to the Lord, asking Him for the needs of ourselves and others.

Trusting in God's loving response, we pray for the church and all who are called to lives of service to God's people, asking that the Lord will bless His undershepherds and all who care for His flock.

**People:**        **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: We pray for ourselves, that the Holy Spirit guide us into gracious ways and instill in us a holy confidence in the goodness of our God, aiding us in our prayers. With thanks for the faithful examples set by those whose earthly journeys are complete and whose witness to Christ yet inspires us, let us pray to the Lord:

**People:**        **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: We pray for the blessing of God upon our nation and its leaders that we may lead peaceable lives, and we pray for the needs of ourselves and others for healing and restoration, for solace and comfort, [*especially . . .*].

**People:**        **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: These things and all else that we should have asked grant us according to Your gracious will, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**People:**        **Amen.**

## OFFERING

### ✠ SACRAMENT ✠

## PREFACE    *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People:**        **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People:**        **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:**        **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord of heaven and earth. We give thanks to You for the gifts of bread and wine here before us and for Your gracious provision for all Your creatures. Invited by Your grace and supported by Your love, we come to Your Table with thanksgiving and praise. Grant that we receive, with true faith and trust in Your words of promise, the bread and wine, that is, the very body and blood of Christ, as a guarantee of the salvation that He purchased for us through His innocent suffering and death on the cross. Receive our prayers and praises and grant that we may follow You as Your people, in this season of Easter and always. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and praise with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:**           **Amen.**

## THE WORDS OF OUR LORD     *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✕ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✕ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

## PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST     *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

**People:**           **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So 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.**

## **PAX DOMINI**

**Pastor:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**People:**        **Amen.**

**AGNUS DEI**        “He’s Risen, He’s Risen” 480 vs. 4,5

## **DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

8:00 AM only    “Your Table I Approach” 628  
                          “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want” 710  
                          “What Is This Bread?” 629

## POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, we thank You for having fed us with the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ, assuring us thereby that we are truly members of His Body, the church. And we ask You to help us by Your Holy Spirit that we may continue in this fellowship and do the good works which You desire us to do; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**People:** Amen.

**BENEDICTION** *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: Go out into the world in peace, have courage, hold to what is good, return no person evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor all people, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. The almighty God—the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit—bless you.

**People:** Amen.

**HYMN** 8:00 AM “I Am Jesus Little Lamb”  
11:00 AM “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” 922