

Trinitarian Congregational Church
TakeOut
Easter 4 B
April 25, 2021

Bells <https://youtu.be/-6qZ9A6GFik>

Announcements

Prelude “Hymn to Joy”
Ludwig Von Beethoven. Setting: John Carter.
<https://youtu.be/hV80IICVTMs>

Call to Worship Michele Lawler
Rosemary Dawson

One: Come, let us worship God, who is our Shepherd.
Let us gather with joy, for we are the sheep of his fold.

**All: We have known the goodness and mercy of God.
We find rest and refreshment in the house of God.**

One: We are known by the good shepherd.
We are invited into relationship in Jesus Christ.

**All: We are among those who know the voice of the shepherd.
We will respond to his call and follow where he leads.**

One: The Shepherd leads us in paths of justice and love.
We are to live by Christ’s example.

**All: We will love one another in deed and truth.
We will share the blessings of God with the world.**

Hymn You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd
<https://youtu.be/gVUtouTsWXU> (tune only)

JESUS CHRIST

99 You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd

1 You, Lord, are both lamb and shep - herd. You, Lord, are both
2 Clothed in light up - on the moun - tain, stripped of might up -
3 You, who walk each day be - side us, sit in pow - er
4 Wor - thy is our earth - ly Je - sus! Wor - thy is our

prince and slave. You, peace - mak - er and sword - bring - er
on the cross, shin - ing in e - ter - nal glo - ry,
at God's side. You, who preach a way that's nar - row,
cos - mic Christ! Wor - thy your de - feat and vic - tory.

of the way you took and gave. ~~Your's~~ the ev - er -
beg - gared by a sol - dier's toss, ~~Your's~~ the ev - er -
have a love that reach - es wide. ~~Your's~~ the ev - er -
Wor - thy still your peace and strife. ~~Your's~~ the ev - er -

last - ing glo - ry: you, whom we both scorn and crave.
last - ing glo - ry: you, who are both gift and cost.
last - ing glo - ry: you, who are our pil - grim guide.
last - ing glo - ry: you, who are our death and life.

WORDS: Sylvia G. Dunstan (1955-1993), alt.
MUSIC: Henry T. Smart (1813-1879)

REGENT SQUARE
8.7.8.7.8.7.

Gathering Prayer

We rejoice today in your goodness, Gentle Shepherd, for you know our heart's desire and our spirit's need, and you assure us of your caring presence in all things. We rejoice that we have been brought into your fold, and we want to welcome others in life-giving ways. Help us to grow in love that is genuine in its caring and sharing. We embrace the wholeness you offer and dare to undertake a healing role for ourselves and our community. Uplift us in worship, teach us your word, and equip us for service, in this hour and beyond this day. Amen.

Gloria Patri

<https://youtu.be/OLz3R1hnUjs>

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

Scriptures

Psalms 23

Michele Lawler

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;

² he makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.

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

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil;
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

John 10:11-18

Rosemary Dawson

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² 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. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care 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 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. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ 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."

Special Music

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

William M. Runyan. Setting: Joel Raney.

<https://youtu.be/GAQz8NPDMgE>

Sermon

Shepherds and Sheep and All the Rest

John 10:11-18

Today as we read the Scripture we bump up against an image that is so familiar to us – the Shepherd and the sheep. So let me ask you, what images come to mind when you think about sheep and shepherds? How many of you actually have put your hands on a lamb or a ram? Not many, to be sure. Mostly we know things like ‘baa, baa black sheep’ and ‘Mary had a little lamb’. That is cute and cuddly, but that is not reality, now is it? So when Scripture tells us ‘the Lord is my shepherd’ and ‘we are the sheep of his pasture’, I don’t think the writer, or God for that matter, is thinking of nursery school rhymes, do you?

No, sheep are not white and fluffy and ‘velcro’ pets. Sheep are dirty and dumb, obstinate, skidish and scatterbrained. Being a shepherd is hard work—the sheep need constant attention - feeding and watering, killing mites and treating wounds, keeping them from fighting or running away. There are pastures that need regular tending and water supplies to keep clean. Add to that the dangers posed by foxes and wolves, and yes, even people, who see these ‘fluffy little lambs’ as an easy meal ticket.

So what is Jesus trying to tell us when he says “I am the good shepherd”? Do you think he meant ‘nursery school sweetness’? Oh no - remember Jesus lived in a land filled with real live sheep and shepherds. He was a descendant of shepherds like Abraham, Moses and David. And he had a faith tradition that proclaimed ‘the Lord is my Shepherd’ and ‘we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.’”

It is this image Jesus had in mind when he said “I am the good shepherd”. In fact, in a literal translation of this passage Jesus says “I am the true shepherd.” I am the real deal – dirt and danger and all. I care for my people like a ‘good shepherd’; a real shepherd who cares for his flock – with all the hard work and danger and sacrifice. I am committed to doing whatever it takes – not just to keep them safe and well, not just to provide good land and abundant resources. No, I am the “good shepherd” as God himself claimed “I myself will become the shepherd of my sheep” (Ezekiel 34:15) I will do whatever it takes to restore my people to God. “I am the good shepherd...I lay down my life for the sheep”. (John 10:14-15)

The Good Shepherd who gives his life for us. That is at the heart of this passage. Five times in nine verses Jesus says “I lay down my life my life for the sheep”. And he even goes so far as to say “this is the charge I have received from my Father.” This passage may just make us uncomfortable, not because we are his sheep, and not because ‘I know my sheep and they know me’ or because there are other sheep who are welcomed into “one flock with one shepherd”. Rather we are uncomfortable with a shepherd who lays down his life for us, especially one who sees this as a ‘command’ from God.

We want to think of the Good Shepherd as cuddles and love, stained glass windows and ‘Mary had a little lamb’. But as the Good Shepherd Jesus is claiming his identity. Jesus knows his soul and his role. He knows his mission. And he knows that identity and mission because he knows God, his Father, intimately and fully. And he knows his world, his people – us – with the same intensity and commitment. Jesus knows the essence of his life and the purpose for his life. He knew it, and he lived it, from Galilee, to a cross, and into glory.

The key to his life, and the key to our life comes from the depth of our relationship with our Creator, our neighbor and our selves. When I say ‘I am...’ I am acknowledging that I am a small reflection of the great I AM. Being that little ‘I am’ is to know the truth of my heart and soul, and to live that truth in relationship with God and with God’s world. To claim our identity is to name our place in God’s

fold, and to claim our ‘charge’, our purpose and mission, from God. We can use multiple images – as Jesus did, with seven different claims of ‘I am’. We can do different works – as Jesus did – whether it was feeding the hungry, teaching his disciples or raising the dead. We can even have potlucks and hymn sings. But the one thing we know, the heart that keeps us vital and active, is whose we are and why we are. We are God’s sheep and the flock of his pasture. We are his people, his servants. And we are here, in this world, to make his goodness and glory known to all.

Amen.

Moment of Reflection

Hymn

God our Author and Creator
<https://youtu.be/X2vU5mS2WbM> (tune only)

God Our Author and Creator

530

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1985

Gen. 1:1-2:3; Acts 17:22-31; Rom. 12:2; John 3:16-17

Unison

1 God our Au - thor and Cre - a - tor, in whose life we find our own,
2 Like those first a - pos-tles, Sav-ior, give us strength to love and serve:
3 Keep us faith-ful, Ho-ly Spir-it, help us bear the mes-sage true,

make our dai - ly wit - ness great-er, by our lives make your love known.
when our faint-ing spir - its wa-ver, fire our hearts and steel our nerve.
that at last all lands may hear it: "God is love; Christ died for you."

Help us show how love em-brac-es those whom fear and greed down-trod;
Teach us wis - dom and com-pas-sion: bid our rest - less thoughts be still;
Join our lives in might-y cho-rus till we come from ev - ery place,

in all yearn-ing hearts and fac - es let us see a child of God.
by your guid-ance help us fash-ion lives con-formed un - to your will.
with all those who went be - fore us, to the full - ness of God's grace.

In 1985, a hymn competition was held to commemorate the centennial of the Women's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention. This winning text by Carl P. Daw, Jr., fulfilled the guideline that the hymn address mission in the context of daily life.

Tune: JEFFERSON 8.7.8.7.D.
Southern Harmony, 1835
Harm. John Ferguson, 1973

Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use. If you would like the church to pray for you please contact pastor Rosemary or Michele Lawler.

Prayers of the People

Loving God, we thank you for your Shepherd's heart. We thank you for Jesus Christ, who came among us to care for us so fully and faithfully. We thank you for the redemption in his blood, and for his abiding Spirit which empowers us to live as people of your flock. And so we come now, O God, seeking your guidance and blessing, that we may fulfill your will for us.

We pray for your church and for this congregation. Help us recognize the deep truth of your grace and call. Lead us as your sheep and as your people into a community that knows and lives according to your loving care and sacrificial service in our relationships to one another and to all the world.

We pray for all our leaders, who are called to shepherd the world as politicians and business leaders, doctors and social workers, teachers and pastors, and care-givers of every sort. May they grow in relationship to the true Shepherd of all and grow in understanding and commitment to self-giving service to others. And we pray for those who need your tender care today. May the lost be found, the distraught gain peace and the broken be made whole. Grant also your healing to the ill, your comfort to the sorrowful and your aid to the needy. We especially lift up ... and we thank you for your faithful care to... And may we who have known the faithful care of our Shepherd share your strength and blessing to all whom our lives touch.

We praise you, Glorious God, for all your goodness and mercy toward us, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Choral Response

https://youtu.be/1AivVHv_mbc

Offering

Under our Shepherd's care we have known the abundant goodness of God. In these moments, we have the opportunity to extend the goodness and grace of Jesus Christ to all the world. Let us dedicate our gifts in faith.

We give you our thanks, O God, for the one who, in love, laid down his life for all people. There are still many who have not experienced the riches of that love, and so we dedicate these offerings for their hope and well-being. May our gifts become tangible signs of your mercy and goodness to all who are in need, and may our lives reflect the care of our Good Shepherd. Amen.

Doxology

<https://youtu.be/5I7PEGUPAXQ>

(choose the one that is best for your faith)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below,
praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God for all that Love has done; Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen

Hymn

Loving Shepherd of the Sheep

<https://youtu.be/5i3Op7pTYIU> (tune only)

Loving Shepherd of Your Sheep

527

1. Lov - ing Shep-herd of your sheep, all your lambs in safe - ty keep;
 2. May they praise you ev - 'ry day, glad - ly all your will o - bey,
 3. Lov - ing Shep-herd, ev - er near, teach your lambs your voice to hear;
 4. Where you lead them may they go, walk - ing in your steps be - low;

noth - ing can your power with - stand, none can pluck them from your hand.
 like your bless - ed ones a - bove, hap - py in your pre - cious love,
 suf - fer not their steps to stray from the strait and nar - row way,
 then, be - fore your Fa - ther's throne, Sav - ior, claim them for your own.

Eliza Leeson, 1842; alt.; mod.

SONG 13 7.7.7.7.
Orlando Gibbons, 1623; alt.

Common Commission

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Benediction

Go now into the world

May the God of peace equip you with everything good to do his will.
Through Jesus Christ, our Great Shepherd, may he accomplish in us what is pleasing to him.
Hebrews 13:20-21adj

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Postlude

“On Eagle’s Wings”
Michael Joncas. Arr. John Carter.
<https://youtu.be/9ohT83Y6YSk>

Music provided by Chris Harris and Lynne Walker