

Church of the Divine Love

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 21, 2024 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#208 – The strife is o'er**

Opening Acclamation for Easter page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Acts 4:5-12**

Psalm 23

Second Lesson: **1 John 3:16-24**

Gradual Hymn **#304 – I come with joy to meet my Lord**

Gospel: **John 10:11-18**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn – **Shout to the Lord** (on insert)

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer B	page 367
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
Hymn during Consecration (printed on insert)	
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn – One Bread One Body (on insert)	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn – You Raise Me Up (on insert)	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday April 21, 2024

Acts 4: 5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10: 11-18.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Does my life matter? Do I make a difference, and if so, how? I suspect we all struggle with these questions or questions like them. I'm pretty sure that at some level they are always with us. And we don't just want someone else to say yes. We want to be able to say yes for ourselves.

I think that is part of the reason for our busyness. We are trying to show that our life does matter and that we make a difference. It's often the unstated, maybe even the unknown reason, why, especially when we are young and developing our careers, we work so hard. We've got to prove ourselves, we've got to acquire, we've got to achieve, because we want to make sure that people know, and more importantly, that we know, that our life matters and makes a difference. And we've probably all had times when we look back on our life, maybe when the kids move out or when we retire, and we ask ourselves what we've done and whether we've made a difference in this world.

I don't know how many times I've been to the nursing home and I've heard someone say, I'm just ready to go. I don't want to be here; I don't understand what God is doing. Why am I still here? I can't help but wonder if what they are really asking is whether their life matters and what difference does it make to another. Are they of value? Regardless of when or how those questions come up I think they are grounded in a deep longing and desire for abundance in our life. We want to be an abundant people. We want to live an abundant life. Today's gospel begins with verse 11, but I want to begin with verse 10 in which Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly." That verse is right in the middle of what is often called the Good Shepherd discourse. Today we hear the second half of that discourse (John 10:11-18). Where do you experience abundance in your life and what does that look like? What does abundance mean for you? What does it feel like when you live apart or distant from abundance? And I'm not talking about abundance in terms of quantity. It is not a quantity. Abundance is a quality of life. It's a way of being. We can all tell stories of times in our life when there was something we wanted and we worked really hard or we waited a long time and we finally got that thing we wanted and once we had it, it didn't do what we thought it would. It didn't fill us up. It didn't fulfill. It didn't satisfy. We got what we wanted but we had no abundance.

Abundance is that quality of life that lets us touch the deepest part of ourselves. It connects us with the divine, with the holy, and with what's good, true, and beautiful in this world. It's not so much about getting something we don't have, but living more fully into what is already present. So that abundance is love that leads to love. It's joy that leads to joy. It's peace that leads to peace. It's kindness that leads to kindness. It's stepping more deeply and more fully into our own life and into the life of another. It never adds to the pain of the world. Abundance is Jesus' way of being in this world. It is the presence of God lived through your life and my life.

When you hear about the good shepherd, who do you think of? Jesus. Yes, that's the usual answer, and it is a correct answer. I am not disputing that it is Jesus but could it be more than Jesus? Could you be the good shepherd? Could I be the good shepherd? Who have been good shepherds in your life?

I don't ask those questions to take away from Jesus, but to expand, enlarge, and extend his presence. Think about what Psalm 23 says about the shepherd. What does the shepherd do? The shepherd leads and guides. The shepherd revives. The shepherd protects. The shepherd companions. The shepherd nourishes and feeds. The shepherd sets a table of welcome and hospitality in the difficult places of life. When have you experienced that in your life? Have you ever had someone guide you in your life? Has someone ever set a table for and welcomed you? Who has fed and nourished your soul? Have you ever had someone companion and walk with you through the valley of the shadow of death? Were they not good shepherds to you? Have you ever had someone say or do just the right thing and he or she revived your soul when you just couldn't do it for yourself?

Or how about those times you did those things for someone else? You set the table. You were the guide. You were the companion. You were the reviver. You were the good shepherd. I think this is happening in all sorts of ways. It happens when we parent. It happens when we love our spouse. It happens when we

care for a sick or dying friend, parent, or spouse. It happens when someone shows up and says, "Can I talk to you about my life? I want to tell you what's going on," and they ask us to be their shepherd. It happens when we go to another and say, "Let me tell you what happened to me. I can't make sense of this," and we ask her or him to be our shepherd. Here's the thing. The shepherd, regardless of who it is, is always leading to abundance. The shepherd is always leading to the green pastures, to the still waters, to the table that is set and the cup that is overflowing. It's always about getting to that place of abundance. But it's not as if abundance wasn't already there. It's always been here, right before us. Sometimes we just need someone to help us find it, to point to it, to show us that it is already here, and to remind us of what really matters most. I'm betting every one of you has shepherded someone else and that there have been times in your life when someone else shepherded you.

Every one of us could tell a story when we were the good shepherd and we guided and we protected and we nourished. And we could tell a story of how, ten minutes later, we were the hired hand and we ran out. We could talk about the sheep that matter and are so valuable. And we could tell stories about the wolves that devour, snatch, and scatter. It would be easy to divide this gospel into good characters and bad characters. Let's not do that. Let's just hear this story as information about our lives, without making a judgment or a conclusion, but simply as an opening to the abundant life. "I have come," Jesus says, "that they may have life and have it more abundantly." It's his starting point and it's his goal. Abundant life is Jesus' promise to each of us. **Amen.**

4 EASTER	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
SAURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	

5 EASTER 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Erika Febres	Jess Berbeck

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Manetta Family	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
John Mulligan	John Rocco	Judy
Warren	Donna A.	Kristen
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Jerry & Family	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Beverly Noel	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.

Mary & Family	Ciara	Jan
Grace Schinella	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Lourdes S.	Henry
Marjorie Guerrier	Jean Estinvil Quatorze	

A special prayer for Christopher, 11 year old facing heart surgery tomorrow.

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.
Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen.

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email

Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart, and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,

Lay my life before you,

How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn

but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So
mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that

all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince
of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions
and glory, now and for ever. Amen

