

# TCC Takeout

## An Order of Service for Worship at Home

***God's Extravagant Welcome:  
"No matter who you are or where  
you are on life's journey, YOU are  
welcome here!"***



**Fourth Sunday of Easter  
May 3, 2020**

### **Announcements:**

#### From Ted Thornton

*TCC Takeout* is a liturgy for these times when we find ourselves without a settled pastor and apart from one another physically. Links will take you to materials appointed for this Sunday in the Lectionary.

I'll be officiating at Ruth Johnson's interment in the West Northfield Cemetery tomorrow, May 4, at 11:00 a.m. This is a private event (social distancing, ten or fewer allowed to attend), but your prayers are requested.

Ridge Summer resident and TCC member, Alan Abel, passed away on Saturday, April 25 from complications due to Covid-19. [Click here](#) for an obituary in the Philadelphia Inquirer. The obituary contains a link to a retirement video - "Alan Abel: Retirement Sounds" - that the orchestra made for him; it contains footage of Alan "on the job" spanning much of his career. The portion featuring Alan begins at the 6:30 mark on the video.

Send announcements for the weekly Trumpet Blast and prayers for Joys and Concerns to me as soon as possible and no later than Tuesday noon for inclusion in the following Sunday's Order of Service. Printed copies of both this service and the Blast will be mailed or delivered to the doorsteps of members who do not use computers. Thanks for your prayers and support.

#### From Chris:

"At My Piano: The lyrics by William Cowper (1731-1800) to the hymn, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way," never fail to reassure me: "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants his footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm. Ye fearful saints, fresh

courage take; The clouds ye so much dread are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.” Listen to it here in a setting by Alice Parker to the hymn tune UNION: [Click here.](#)”

Many thanks to Chris, Patter, and Heather for putting together music for this service.

**Introit:** [People Need the Lord](#) (Steve Green)

### **Call to Worship (after Psalm 23)**

**One:** Let us pray these familiar words, recognizing in the Risen Christ our Good Shepherd:

**All:** Jesus, you are our shepherd. We shall never want. You make us lie down in green pastures; you lead us beside the still waters. You restore our souls. You guide us in the paths of righteousness for your name’s sake. Even though we may walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we fear no evil, for you, Christ, comfort us. Jesus has prepared a table for us in the presence of our foes; Jesus has anointed us with the oil of salvation; our cup runs over! Surely, goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of our Holy Savior forever and ever. Amen.

### **Opening Hymn**

[My Shepherd Will Supply My Need - Hymn Lyrics & Music](#)

1 My Shepherd, you supply my need,  
most holy is your name;  
in pastures fresh you make me feed,  
beside the living stream.  
You bring my wand’ring spirit back.  
when I forsake your ways;  
you lead me, for your mercy’s sake,  
in paths of truth and grace.  
2 When through the shades of death I walk,  
your presence is my stay;  
one word of your supporting breath  
drives all my fears away.

Your hand in sight of all my foes,  
does still my table spread;  
my cup with Blessings overflows,  
your oil anoints my head.  
3 Your sure provisions gracious God  
attend me all my days;  
oh, may your house be my abode,  
and all my work be praise.  
Here would I find a settled rest,  
while others go and come;  
no more a stranger, nor a guest,  
but like a child at home.

### **Gathering Prayer**

Incarnate God,  
You are the one who comes to us in Jesus Christ.  
Holy One,  
You are the one who comes to us in the Holy Spirit.  
Sovereign of Earth and Heaven,

You are the one who calls us to recognize you today and every day  
 As splendid *Mystery*.  
 Gather our hearts and minds this day.  
 Kindle our God-consciousness.  
 Let us worship you in awe and wonder!

### **Gloria Patri**

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,  
 World without end,  
 Amen, Amen

**Anthem:** [Maybe the Rain](#)

**Reading From Scripture:** [John 10:1-10](#)

***“For the word of God in Scripture, For the Word of God Among Us, For the Word of God Within Us, Thanks Be to God”***

**Special Music:** [The Lord is my Shepherd, Rutter and the Cambridge Singers](#)

### **Reflection: Ted**

In John 10:9, Jesus says, “I am the door: if anyone enters by me he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

I’ve been thinking a lot about doors this week: the right doors and the wrong doors I’ve opened and passed through in my life. In *Alice in Wonderland*, the heroine, having landed in the strange vestibule with all the doors, swallows one potion after another in her increasingly desperate attempts to change how big or small she is so she can fit through the correct door and enter the garden.

This scene reminds me of times in my life when I’ve opened doors and walked into places that weren’t the right fit for me: places where I shouldn’t have been in the first place, including places where I wasn’t welcome. And, I remember doing a fair bit of fumbling about trying to discover just where exactly I did belong. Which door was the right fit for me?

Doors and gates, of course, are rich with meaning, not only in today’s passage from the gospel, but throughout the Bible and beyond. Doors and gates can be tricky and dangerous because we often don’t know what’s waiting on the other side. How often during this time of terrible crisis we’re in right now have you wondered about which “doors” are safe to pass through and which aren’t? Have you found yourself yearning for a gatekeeper, a doorman or doorwoman, to open the right doors for you, to point the way in the safe direction?

In our reading from John, the “door” or gate is maintained by the good shepherd. During the period between Jesus’ death and resurrection and beyond, a period that may have lasted twenty years - not three days - according to some biblical scholars (the first New Testament writings, the Letters of Paul, don’t appear until the 50s A.D.), the disciples lived in fear of persecution. They, like Jesus, had been branded rebel enemies of the imperial Roman state and as such faced immediate crucifixion if caught.

Living in a sheep herding culture, the image of Jesus as their “good shepherd,” the guardian of the gate, was a source of great comfort and courage. Shepherds were known for their sometimes heroic efforts to save their sheep, including the legendary laying down of their lives for their sheep (John 10:11). I’ll never forget a hot day in July in the fields outside Bethlehem when I watched a shepherd and his herd. The ground was mostly brown, parched, and bare since in Israel it stops raining in April and doesn’t start again until November. The sheep surrounded the shepherd such that I couldn’t see the man’s legs. Everytime he started to move, the sheep moved with him because, as my Israeli companion explained, those sheep knew that their shepherd was their life line; he would find the next patch of life giving green pastures (or what was left of them).

The earliest depiction of Jesus we have, long before any of the great masterpieces of Christian art (long before any pictures of a baby in a manger, or a man hanging on a cross, or rising from the dead), is a roughly hewn sculpture of a shepherd with a lamb across his shoulders.

A good shepherd may be prepared to lay down his life for his sheep, but it takes a good gatekeeper standing by the closed gate to know what’s good or what’s bad on the other side. Not surprisingly, some of the best gatekeepers even in our own times are to be found in the region where Jesus lived. Often the first person you meet in a city like Cairo, where I lived for a year, is your apartment building’s gatekeeper: in Arabic, your building’s “bowab.”

Your bowab is the source of many services that are key to your comfort and sometimes even your survival. His job is to get to know everyone who lives in his building, all of his “sheep,” if you will. He screens everyone who enters the building. His is the first face you see when you leave your building, and he’s there to greet you when you return whatever the time of day or night. I often wondered when these guys slept.

It doesn’t take long before you begin to feel just how much your bowab cares for your health and safety. He will hail cabs for you, carry bundles, give directions, guide you to vendors with the best goods and prices, and even change money for you (at the best black market rates).

What’s more, even though he technically works for you, it sometimes feels the other way around. Bowabs really take charge of managing many parts of your life. One time when I took a group of students to Egypt, the bowab of our building in Alexandria, an elderly gentleman named Ibrahim, scolded me furiously for permitting some of my kids to stay out a little late one

night. He slept in a tiny hut attached to the gate into our courtyard, and he was a light sleeper. He awoke to hear my kids climbing over the eight foot locked gate to get back inside. Not merely a doorman, Ibrahim was an everyday paternal presence in our lives, kind and always helpful, but also stern and fatherly when he had to be, and fiercely protective when it came to our well-being.

If ever we needed good shepherds and good gatekeepers in our lives, the experience of these past several weeks makes us yearn for the kind of clear guidance, comfort, and courage that Jesus' disciples saw in their memories of their risen teacher, friend, and savior. In these times of radical physiological, sociological, and economic turmoil we need good guides, good shepherds more than ever. We need to see and feel the presence of our good shepherd and gatekeeper, the risen Christ. Jesus has risen and he stands watch at our gates. May his presence fill our hearts with his spirit, and may he lead us through the dark doors and gates of our lives into God's eternal light and presence. Amen.

## Hymn of Reflection

[He Leadeth Me](#)

## Joys and Concerns

Longtime friend and Summer Ridge member of TCC, Alan Abel, passed away due to complications from Covid-19 on April 25 (more information in Ted's announcement above). Please pray for Janet and the rest of the family.

Prayers are requested for Steve Stoia and for Joan (read more about their ordeal in this week's Trumpet Blast).

## Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God, help us to live in love and charity with others, and, as we ask for your forgiveness, enable us to be forgiving. Take from our lives the hidden grudges and concealed hate. Forgive us that we have so often denied you; that like lost sheep we have turned away from you; that we have sung with our lips what we have not had the courage to practice in our lives.

Forgive our sins, comfort our sorrows, calm our fears, and take from us every proud thought. So fill us with love and concern for others, and make us ready to help and quick to forgive.

We thank you for every good thing in our lives for home and friends and family; for all the beauty and loveliness in the world about us which has lifted our hearts and made us glad;

for life itself with all its promise and possibility.

We thank you that in every great experience of life,  
when it seemed as if we were passing through water and fire  
we are not alone, but you were there as companion and friend.

We thank you that we are yours, created for your glory;  
that you have called us all by name,  
that through Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep,  
who lived and died and rose again for us,  
you have redeemed us;  
and that your love will never finally let us go, or ultimately give us up.

We thank you that so often you have come to us  
in the ordinary and everyday things of life, in our work and in our leisure .  
Help us there to seek you and find you and serve you,  
as in Christ you have sought and found and served us.  
We ask it for his sake. Amen.

## **Intercessions**

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbors. As his disciples in this age, we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe in which we are privileged to live and our neighbors with whom we share it.

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love. Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Hear O Lord, we pray, our petitions of general intercession. We pray for the lonely, for the bereaved, for the sick, for the aged, for those who feel overwhelmed by personal problems. We ask, on their behalf, for the comfort of your presence.

We pray especially for those in need who are on our hearts and minds and lips this morning. We pray for all who are ill or who suffer from any affliction: physical, mental, or spiritual. Bring healing and comfort to them, their families, and to those who care for them and to others who love them.

Bless and protect from harm all workers who risk their health and their lives in the service of others: first responders, police, doctors, nurses, and all others who work in the healing professions. We ask these things in the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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 to the joyous feast prepared in your house, where we celebrate with you forever. Amen.

Now praying together as Jesus taught us, we say,

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 sins,  
 as we forgive those who sin against us.  
 Lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom,  
 and the power and the glory forever.  
 Amen.

**Prayer Response** - NCH 769 - *Hear Our Prayer, O God* -- [Audio version](#)

Hear Our Prayer, O God,  
 Hear our prayer, O God,  
 Incline Thine ear to us,  
 And Grant us your peace.

**Closing Hymn** - [God Will Take Care of You - Hymn](#)

**Choral Benediction:** [God Be With You, Ralph Vaughan Williams](#)

**Pastoral Benediction**

Go now with your trust in the good shepherd,  
 and let us love, not just in words,  
 but in truth and action.  
 Believe in the name of Jesus Christ,  
 and love one another, just as he has commanded us.  
 Amen.



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