

A large flock of sheep is gathered in a field during sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. In the background, there are trees and a few people. On the right side, a shepherd wearing a hat and a light-colored shirt is visible, looking towards the sheep. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and pastoral.

**“I AM THE
GOOD
SHEPHERD.”**

PRINCE OF PEACE

Dare to Live in Love!

Fourth Sunday of Easter April 25, 2021

Prelude

Welcome

It is love for each other by which we know we are followers of Jesus, the ever-attentive shepherd. In the face of our society that strives to foster the attitude “everyone for themselves,” we are told that they will know we are Christians by our love. How can we listen to the word that draws us together with our neighbor in order to build up the whole?

Call to Worship: This is the call!

We lean into this day with the strength we have.

We lift up our heads to meet the day.

God sends out a call that will not let us go.

We fortify our hearts with compassion and action.

If rain still lingers, open the umbrellas of love and set out anyway.

For we are called to live again!

Greeting

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Prayer

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation! You are the restorer of life, the conqueror of all that is death-dealing in our hearts and in this world. Come with us, dazzle us with your brilliance, move us to wakefulness – so that we can be risen with Christ and in Christ. Be with us now, we pray.
Amen.

Time for Confession and Forgiveness

We confess this day that we have been slow to join with Jesus in the dance that brings life to all, brings love to all, brings sustenance to all. ‘

In silence, let us lift up our prayers of confession... *(a time of silence)*

Hear this good news!
God has loved you from the very beginning.
The invitation of Christ is never-ending:
New life in Christ is yours right now.
The Holy Spirit is transforming you and
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
Glory to God! Alleluia! Amen!

Prayer of the day

O Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

This we ask in your name.

Amen.

The Word

Children's Moment

First Reading: Acts 4.5-12

⁵The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.' ¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

The word of the Lord:

Thanks be to God!

Psalm 23

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

**²He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;**

³he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

**⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**⁶Surely 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 Greeting (*sing it out!*):

Halle, halle, hallelu---jah! Halle, halle, hallelu---jah!

Halle, halle, hallelu---jah! Hallelujah, halle-lujah!

Gospel: John 10.11-18

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The 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. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I 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. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No 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.”

The gospel of the Lord!

(*Gospel response, sing it out!*)

Halle, halle, hallelu---jah! Halle, halle, hallelu---jah!

Halle, halle, hallelu---jah! Hallelujah, halle-lujah!

Message

Hymn of the Day: “Now the Green Blade Rises” 379 John MacLeod Campbell
Crum, 1872-1958; Music French carol; Text Copyright Oxford University Press; NOEL NOUVELET 11 10 10 11

1. Now the green blade rises
from the buried grain
wheat that in dark earth
many days has lain
Love lives again
that with the dead has been
love is come again
like wheat arising green.

3. Forth he came at Easter
like the risen grain
he that for three days
in the grave had lain
raised from the dead
my living Lord is seen
love is come again
like wheat arising green.

2. In the grave they laid him
Love by hatred slain
Thinking that he would
Never wake again
Laid in the earth
Like grain that sleeps unseen
love is come again
like wheat arising green.

4. When our hearts are wintry
grieving or in pain
your touch can call us
back to life again
fields of our hearts
that dead and bare have been
love is come again
like wheat arising green.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the holy Spirit

and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Peace Announcements

Prayers of the Church

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

(A brief moment of silence)

Loving Shepherd, you know your own and your own know you. Your voice calls us to your loving embrace. Strengthen your church throughout the world that we bear witness to your expansive love.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding Shepherd, your love flows as we reach out to those around us. Move us with your Spirit, so that we lay down our lives for those in need. Help us love one another in truth and action.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Saving Shepherd, you restore us to wholeness. Help our community in our life together and give us vigor as a people of faith. In the midst of challenges and opportunities, fill us anew with your Holy Spirit.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal Shepherd, you hold us securely in your loving hands. In the assurance or resurrection hope, we remember our loved ones who have died in you. Bring us, with them, to dwell in your house forever.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your weeping into dancing.

May Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit Bless you, now and forever..

Amen!

Sending Hymn: “Now Thank We All Our God” 840 NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT

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1. Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices
who wondrous things has done
in whom His world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms
has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today

3. All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given
the Son and Spirit blest
who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God
whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now
and shall be evermore.

2. Oh may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us
and keep us all in grace
and guide us when perplexed
and free us from all harm
In this world and the next.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news! Alleluia!
Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

Postlude

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