

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 serene.

**“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**

<sup>5</sup>The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup>with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. <sup>7</sup>When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" <sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup>if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, <sup>10</sup>let 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. <sup>11</sup>This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup>There 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

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

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

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

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

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

**<sup>6</sup>Surely 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

<sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>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.”

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.

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.

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.

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

67 67 66 66; Catherine Winkworth | Johann Crüger | Martin Rinkart © Words: Public Domain Music: Public Domain

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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