

## Fourth Sunday of Easter Worship Service

10:15 AM on April 21, 2024

### Quiet Time Prayer

God, our church is composed of people like me. We help make it what it is. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, of compassion, charity and mercy if we are filled with these same things. Help me to be what I want my church to be. Amen.

### Welcome

**Prelude** “He Leadeth Me” *Albin Whitworth*  
“The King of Love” *Robert Cundick*

**Greeting** God is good **all the time**. All the time **God is good**.

**Question of the Day** What makes a sheep “good”?

**\*Hymn #549 UMH** “Where Charity and Love Prevail”

### \*Call to Worship

The Lord Jesus Christ is our shepherd.

**He lays down his life for his sheep.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is our shepherd.

**He knows us, and we belong to him.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is our shepherd.

**He speaks, and we listen for his voice.**

### \*Prayer of Invocation

**Good Shepherd, we meet in your name, confident that we are known and loved by you. Here we draw close to one another and to you, expecting to be empowered by fresh insights to live as your people. We want to care for one another in life-giving ways. We seek to reach out to those who deny you or suspect us. Help us grow in love that is genuine in its caring and self-sacrifice. We embrace the wholeness you offer and dare to risk acceptance of a healing role for ourselves and this faith community. Equip us for service beyond this hour of meeting. Amen.**

### John 10:11-18 *New Revised Standard Version*

[Jesus said:] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 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. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 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.”

### I John 3:11, 16-24 *New Revised Standard Version*

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . . We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

**Response:** *The Word of God, for the people of God! Thanks be to God!*

**\*Hymn #408 UMH** “The Gift of Love”

### **Time of Prayer**

#### **How Is It With Your Soul?**

#### **Call to Confession**

If we are honest with ourselves, our hearts condemn us. But God, who knows everything, is greater than our hearts; and God’s deep desire for us is mercy, love, and peace.

Therefore let us confess our sin.

#### **Prayer of Confession**

**Lord, have mercy on us.**

**We talk about love, but our actions betray us.**

**We talk about love, but we neglect the poor.**

**We talk about love, but we fail to love one another.**

**Lord, have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, and abide in us by the power of your Spirit  
so that our lives may show our love for Jesus Christ,  
in whose body we live and in whose name we pray.**

#### *Time of Silent Prayer*

#### **Assurance**

This is the good news of the gospel: in Christ Jesus we are forgiven.

#### **Thanks be to God!**

And with Jesus we pray:

#### **The Lord’s Prayer**

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Answer to the Question of the Day** What makes a sheep “good”?

**Time of Offering** *Thank you to everyone for your faithful generosity.*

#### **Offering Prayer**

**Gracious God, we give you thanks that you have shown us the meaning of love through Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us. Show us how to share Christ’s love by giving our lives for one another; to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

**Song of Offering #2226 FWS** “Bind Us Together”

**Sermon** “Good Sheep” Rev. Joyce Rich

#### **\*Commission and Blessing**

We are invited to make God’s house our home.

**And we are sent out into God’s world to serve.**

When we ask God for what we need, God provides.

**When we are obedient, we know God abides in us.**

God's love in Jesus the Christ has blessed us.

**We have received the gift of God's own Spirit.**

Amen. **And Amen.**

**\*Hymn #381 UMH "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"**

### **Announcements**

**Prayer for Our Wisconsin Delegates to General Conference** *By Rev. Jenny Arneson*

**God of Living Hope, as we move toward the days of gathering for General Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, pour out your Holy Spirit to bless the Delegates and Bishops in their preparation and bless all those involved in organizing and hosting his worldwide event. During the days of General Conference, may hearts and minds be open to your Spirit moving and to the possibilities for the future of The United Methodist Church. Guide each one making decisions to seek to understand one another with humility, gentleness, and care. Keep us all mindful of doing no harm, doing good, and staying in love with you. Then renew us as a worldwide church in our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Amen.**

**Postlude "The Faithful Shepherd"** *G. F. Handel*

**Read for Next Week:** John 15:1-17; I John 4:7-21

*Liturgical resources drawn from: **Led by Love: Worship Resources for Year B**, Lavon Bayler © 1996 United Church Press; **Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion; Liturgies for Year B, Volume 1**, Kimberly Bracken Long, editor © 2014 Westminster John Knox Press.*