

## **Fourth Sunday of Easter Worship Service, April 25, 2021**

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

**Question of the Day** What was April 22?

a) Climate Change Day b) World Malaria Day c) National Day of Prayer d) Earth Day

### **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**

**Lord God, good shepherd, by the leading of your Spirit, help us to listen for your voice and follow in your paths all the days of our lives; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### **Hymn** "Cornerstone"

#### **Psalm 23 *New Revised Standard Version***

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths, for his name's sake.

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.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

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.

#### **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 3:16-24 *New Revised Standard Version***

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 has 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!*

### **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**

We seek God’s grace with boldness because we trust in Jesus Christ, the One who loves us and laid down his life for us. This is the good news of the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

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

As the forgiven children of God we pray together with Jesus:

#### **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**

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

#### **Offering Prayer**

**How can we express our thanks, O God, for the one who laid down life itself in witness to our love for all people? We are aware that many have not experienced that love. Grant us the courage to risk life itself that others may see Christ abiding in us and thus come to know your goodness and mercy. Amen.**

**Sermon** “Love to Death” Rev. Joyce Rich

### **Commission and Blessing**

In the name of the good shepherd, love one another. **May it be so.**  
May the goodness and mercy of God follow you all the days of your life,  
and, at your life's end, may you dwell in the house of the Lord forever.  
Amen. **And Amen.**

**Hymn** "What a Beautiful Name"

### **Announcements**

**Readings For Next Week:** John 15:1-8; I John 4:7-21; Acts 8:26-40

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