

Sunday Worship Service – April 26, 2026
Fourth Sunday of Easter – Good Shepherd Sunday
Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book – Holy Communion Setting 7

Words of Welcome by Pastor

Land Acknowledgement & Welcome Statement

Introduction to the Theme of the Bible Readings

The 4th Sunday of the Easter season is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. The shepherd that we hear about in Psalm 23 is celebrated in the gospel of John as both shepherd and gate for the sheep. We rejoice that Jesus our shepherd calls us each by name that we may have abundant life. This abundant life is described in the book of Acts as a result of fellowship, breaking bread together, prayer, learning and sharing.

Thanksgiving for Baptism¹

Blessed be the + holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water,
 the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**
 Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
 we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
 Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us
 in your image and placed us in a well-watered garden.
 In the desert, you promised pools of water for the parched,
 and you gave us water from the rock.
 When we did not know the way,
 you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters.
 At the cross, you washed us from Jesus' wounded side,
 and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere.
Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love.
Satisfy all who thirst, and give us the life only you can give.
To you be given honour and praise through Jesus Christ, our living water,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

¹ From *All Creation Sings*, © 2020 Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN.

#789 Gathering Hymn “Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us” (v.1-2,4)

1. Savior like a shepherd lead us; much we need your tender care.
In your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your fold prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us; we are yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us; we are yours.
2. We are yours; in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
keep your flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.
4. Early let us seek your favor, early let us do your will;
blessed Lord and only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.

p.175 **Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Call to Worship*

Come in, all who are tired and thirsty.

The Good Shepherd leads us to grassy meadows and restful waters.

Come in, all who are anxious and afraid.

The Good Shepherd protects us and leads us through dark valleys.

Come in, all who are empty and exhausted.

The Good Shepherd fills our lives with goodness and faithful love.

Come in, to be refreshed, to rest, and to receive.

The Good Shepherd has brought us here.

Prayer of the Day*

*Beloved Shepherd, we come to listen to your familiar voice. Call to us
above the noise of our lives. Gather us from our comings and goings.
Feed us in the pastures of your love and lead us to abundant life. Amen.*

First Reading: Acts 2:42-47

*Today’s reading from the book of Acts is a description of life
in the community following Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost,*

when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

A reading from Acts, chapter 2:

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. God added daily to the community those who were being saved.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

#778 Psalm Hymn "The Lord's My Shepherd"

p.179 **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia!

Gospel Reading: John 10:1-10

In the gospel reading from John, Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

The holy gospel according to John, the 10th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

(Jesus said:) "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit.

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.
 The gatekeeper opens the gate for them, and the sheep hear the shepherd's voice. The shepherd calls the sheep by name and leads them out.
 When the shepherd has brought out all the sheep, the shepherd goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know the shepherd's voice.
 The sheep will not follow a stranger, but they will run from the stranger because they do not know the voice of strangers."
 Jesus used this figure of speech with them,
 but they did not understand what Jesus was saying to them.
 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.
 All who came before me are thieves and bandits;
 but the sheep did not listen to them.
 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved,
 and will come in and go out and find pasture.
 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.
 I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

#502 Hymn of the Day "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" (v.1,3-4,6)

- 1. The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.**
- 3.**
- 4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
thy rod and staff my comfort still; thy cross before to guide me.**
- 6. And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.**

Affirmation of Faith for Good Shepherd Sunday ²

I believe I need a shepherd.

**Because I am sometimes timid and other times overconfident,
 because I often don't know the best path yet pretend I do,
 because I rush into dead ends or lead others into hazardous places,
 because the things I crave may not be what is good for me,**

² Copyright © 2002 Bruce D. Prewer. Posted on Bruce Prewer's Home Page. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>

I need a shepherd.

**I believe in Jesus, the best possible shepherd;
his wisdom leads me to the best opportunities,
Jesus' word comforts me when I'm anxious or afraid,
his arm steadies me when I feel weary and heavy-laden.**

**I believe in Jesus, the best possible shepherd.
I believe that I do not find him but he finds me,
that I am under Jesus' care by virtue of sheer grace,
the love he gives me is to be shared with others,
that Jesus treasures my name and prepares a place for me.
I trust Jesus, the good shepherd. Amen.**

Welcoming New Members

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the risen Christ be with you always! **And also with you!**

Prayers of Intercession³

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. Prayer petitions will end with *Hear us, O God*.
And the congregation is invited to respond by praying **Your mercy is great**.
A brief silence.

You are the shepherd who gathers us in your loving arms. Help your church to listen for your voice, especially when the hurtful voices of this world threaten to overpower us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The green pastures, still waters, and dark valleys of this earth all belong to you, O God. Sustain your creation with a love that is just. Where there is destruction, bring healing. Where there is desolation, bring abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all of creation. Direct leaders in our own time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

³ <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/DayTexts>

You journey with us wherever our paths may lead. We pray for those feeling overwhelmed by anxiety, depression, or grief.

We pray for those living with dementia, those living with cancer or chronic illness, and those in hospital. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You are the sheeppath that gives safety to your beloved flocks. Provide protection for refugees, victims of domestic violence, those who are imprisoned, and all people who are vulnerable to violence and mistreatment. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, O God; through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Offering and Offering Prayer

Shepherding God, as we offer these gifts to you, we thank you for the love flowing through our lives and through these gifts. May they be filled with your love, that through these gifts, many signs and wonders will be done. May no one be in need, and may your community of love be established upon this earth. In your holy name, we pray. Amen

p.180 **Great Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is a right, good and joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give thanks to you for the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, who in dying destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with your creatures on earth and all the heavenly chorus, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

p.181 **Holy, holy, holy Lord God, God of might and power; holy is the Lord.**

Holy, holy, holy Lord God, God of might and power; holy is the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna here on earth.

Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna here on earth.

Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Eucharistic Prayer E: The Season of Easter⁴

Holy, living, and loving God, we raise you for creating the heavens and the earth. We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood, for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery, and for sending Jesus.

Holy are you, and holy is your son, Jesus Christ,
who taught his disciples to listen for his voice and to follow him,
even when all hope seemed lost.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
Our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat, this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, Jesus took the cup,
Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the covenant in my blood,
Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup: carry us in your arms
from death to life, that we may live as your chosen ones, clothed in Christ.

Through him all honour is yours, almighty God, with the Holy Spirit, in your
holy church, both now and forever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

⁴ *With One Voice: Leaders Edition*, Eucharistic Prayer E – The Season of Easter, p.69 (adapted for inclusive language). © 1995 Augsburg Fortress Minneapolis.

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.
 Amen.**

Communion Distribution

#780 Communion Hymn “Shepherd me, O God”

Refrain: **Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants,
 beyond my fears, from death into life.**

- 1. God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,
 I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,
 I walk by the quiet waters of peace. *(Refrain)***
- 2. Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,
 you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,
 my spirit shall sing the music of your name. *(Refrain)***
- 3. Though I should wander the valley of death,
 I fear no evil, for you are at my side,
 your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. *(Refrain)***
- 4. You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred,
 crowning me with love beyond my power to hold. *(Refrain)***
- 5. Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life;
 I will dwell in the house of my God forevermore. *(Refrain)***

Communion Blessing

Prayer after communion

Merciful God, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,
 keep us always under God’s protection, and give us grace to follow in Jesus’
 steps. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing

Go forth and share the **love** of our good shepherd wherever you go.
 Go forth and share the **blessings** of our good shepherd

with everyone you meet.

Go forth and share the **promise** of our good shepherd with those who feel unworthy of God's love.

Go forth and share the **grace** we have experienced through the love of our good shepherd.

In the name of + God our Creator, Jesus our Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit, our comforter.

#774 Sending Hymn "What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine"

- 1. What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms; what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms.**

Refrain

**Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.**

- 2. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the everlasting arms.**

Refrain

- 3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms.**

Refrain

Sending

Go in peace, filled with the joy of the risen Christ
to love and serve God through word and deed. **Thanks be to God!**

Sources:

Bible passages (except where otherwise indicated) from Common English Bible (CEB).

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