

Worship in the Home: April 25, 2021

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Worship in the Home

Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year B

April 25, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd's willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love. First John illustrates what it means to lay down our lives for one another by the example of sharing our wealth with any sibling in need.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

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.

Amen.

First Reading: Acts 4:5-12

Peter and John had been arrested the previous day because they were proclaiming the news of the resurrection to the people. In today's reading, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can proclaim salvation in Jesus' name to the religious authorities.

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 Peter and John 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."

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23

¹The LORD^l is my shepherd;
I shall not^l be in want.

²The LORD makes me lie down^l in green pastures
and leads me be-^lside still waters.

³You restore my^l soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways^l for your name's sake.

⁴Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall^l fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they^l comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence^l of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is^l running over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days^l of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the^l LORD forever.

Second Reading: 1 John 3:16-24

Jesus' death on our behalf is the clearest demonstration of divine love. This is the very love we share with others, not just through our words but especially through our deeds. In sharing such love we fulfill God's commandments.

¹⁶We know love by this, that Jesus Christ laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How 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?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before God ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and God knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from God whatever we ask, because we obey the commandments and do what pleases God.

²³And this is God's commandment, that we should believe in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and love one another, just as Jesus has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey God's commandments abide in God, and God abides in them. And by this we know that God abides in us, by the Spirit that God has given us.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 10:11-18

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.

[Jesus said:] ¹¹I 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.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

In the ancient Near East, kings and other leaders were often compared with shepherds. But many of them were quite awful, serving only themselves, misleading and betraying and even forsaking the people. They could destroy instead of working to build. We too sometimes have bad leaders. We may even be tempted to support them. Or we may ourselves be such leaders. But Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the Good Shepherd. He does his "shepherding" — his knowing and leading us — by laying down his life in love, by staying with us, sharing our need and death, and never running away. By the Spirit God gives us through the scriptures — as also through the water of baptism and the overflowing cup of the eucharist — we know him and his healing name. Even now, in a time of separation, the risen Christ is drawing us together into unity as one flock with the one true shepherd. Saved from ourselves and from bad leadership, we are formed to believe in the name of Jesus, to love each other, and to give ourselves to our neighbor's needs.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 502), "My Shepherd, You Supply My Need" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 782). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[The King of Love My Shepherd Is](#)
[My Shepherd, You Supply My Need](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

On this fourth Sunday of Easter, let us pray for the church, the earth, and all in any need, responding to each petition with the words, "Abide with us in love."

A brief silence.

God of goodness and mercy, we pray for the church: that bishops, pastors, and deacons be upheld in their tasks as shepherds of your flock; and that congregations persevere in their ministries of nurture of the young and care for the aging.

A brief silence.

O God, steadfast shepherd of the church, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray for members of other world religions: that there be an end to interreligious strife; that Sikhs be comforted in their sorrow; and that during Ramadan Muslims be strengthened for lives of prayer and service.

A brief silence.

O God, gracious keeper of many flocks, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray for the earth: that green pastures and clear waters be provided for herds and flocks, those raised for human use and those living wild; and that farm fields be saved from storm or drought.

A brief silence.

O God, mighty preserver of the universe, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray for the nations of the earth: that governments cease aggression against their neighbors; that peace come to Afghanistan, Syria, and Myanmar; and that China, Russia, and the United States coexist in concord with each other.

A brief silence:

O God, the true cornerstone of society, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray for justice in our land: that our criminal justice system continue to be reformed; that ethnic and economic prejudices cease their holds on our people; and that there be peace in our streets.

A brief silence.

O God, almighty judge of righteousness, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray for those who are hungry: the unemployed, the underemployed, those living in refugee camps or on our streets, the migrants seeking a better life; that they be fed.

A brief silence.

O God, benevolent table of food and fellowship, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray for all who are sick or suffering: for those stricken with the coronavirus, especially in India and Brazil; for the children who have known continual sorrow; and for those we name here before you. . . .

A brief silence.

O God, healer of our every ill, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We pray finally for ourselves: that you will receive the petitions of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

O God, tender shepherd of each of us, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

We praise you for all the sheep of your fold, each lamb of your own flock. Especially today we thank you for the evangelist Mark and for his gospel book of faith. Bring us with all the saints to dwell in your house forever.

A brief silence.

O God, eternal giver of life, we pray:

Abide with us in love.

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 Savior and Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 789), "Have No Fear, Little Flock" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 764). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Praise to you, O God, for your Word of life: creating a wondrous universe, proclaiming freedom from captivity, becoming the song of your people. We praise you, O God, for your Word.

We praise you, O God, for your Word.

Your Word is made flesh among us: with Mary in the garden, you call us by name. With Thomas beholding your wounds, you call us to believe. With sheep of other folds, we are gathered by your voice. Your Word names our death and our life: a seed that falls into the earth and dies, rain and snow that come down from heaven to water the earth, a vine in which we abide. Through your Word, you appoint us to bear fruit, fruit that will last. We bless you, O God, for your Word.

We bless you, O God, for your Word.

By your living Word, we are witnesses of these things. Breathe into us your Holy Spirit. Open our minds to understand the scriptures. Give us wisdom to declare what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life. Fill us with strength to love, not in word or speech alone, but in truth and action. With every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, we join in the hymn of all creation, as we thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word.

We thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

God of love, you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you. (Our mailbox has a lock on it, so is secure.)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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. 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.

Then speak the Blessing:

May our glorious God grant us a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.

The God of life,

Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[The Day of Resurrection](#);" "[The Lord Is My Shepherd](#);" "[We Trust in God Alone](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 95. **Tuesday** Revelation 7:13-17. **Wednesday** Mark 14:26-

31. **Thursday** (commemoration of Catherine of Siena, theologian, 1380) Psalm 22:25-

31. **Friday** Amos 8:11-13. **Saturday** (Philip and James, Apostles) John 14:8-14. **Fifth Sunday of Easter** (commemoration of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, 373) Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. To purchase copies of [Evangelical Lutheran Worship](#) and [All Creation Sings](#) for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from [All Creation Sings](#) will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw.

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Thank you to those who provide you with these worship services.

Synod Assembly, 30 April – 2 May.

Grubby Sunday, May 2nd, No potluck – hopefully next year.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Bob Broberg, Carole Holten, Donna Jackson-Hein, Lois Goossen (Friend of Newgard's), Danny Vorbeck.

Pastor's Mid-week Message for April 21, 2021

When Queen Victoria of England, pinned one of England's highest awards on Helen Keller, she asked Helen Keller, "How do you account for your remarkable accomplishment in life? How do you explain the fact that even though you were both deaf and blind, you were able to accomplish so much?" Without a moment's hesitation, Helen Keller said, "If it had not been for Anne Sullivan, the name of Helen Keller would have remained unknown."

While we know Helen Keller's story, most of us do not know who saw the potential in Anne Sullivan. As a young girl, Anne Sullivan was known as "Little Annie." She was diagnosed as being hopelessly insane, and was locked in the basement of a mental institution outside of Boston. Little Annie would on occasion violently attack anyone who came near her. At other times, she would completely ignore them.

An elderly nurse believed there was hope for the child, and felt she could communicate love and hope to her. The nurse daily visited Little Annie, but for a long time, Little Annie gave no indication she was aware of her presence. The elderly nurse persisted and repeatedly brought some cookies and left them in her room. Soon the doctors in the institution noticed a change. After a period of time, they moved little Annie upstairs. Finally, the day came when this seemingly "hopeless case" was released. Filled with compassion for others because of her institution experience, Little Annie, Anne Sullivan, wanted to help others.

Therefore, it was Anne Sullivan who saw the great potential in Helen Keller. She loved her, disciplined her, played, prayed, pushed, and worked with her, until the flickering candle that was her life became a beacon that helped light the pathway and lighten the burdens of people all over the world. But first there was the elderly nurse, then Anne Sullivan, then Helen Keller, and finally each one of us, and additional millions, who have been influenced by the example of Helen Keller. Last Saturday evening my wife Susan and I viewed "The Miracle Worker" on TCM. Since we both are romantics at heart, we shed a tear or two when Anne finally got through to Helen. I won't say how that happened, in case you haven't seen the movie or play yet. If you already have, you'll remember.

By the way, Mark Twain dubbed Anne Sullivan as "The Miracle Worker." Of course, we know the greatest "Miracle Worker" Jesus Christ!

Pastor Bill Sass