

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

*The Vision of Zion Lutheran Church and School is a Christ-centered,
growing, spiritual home for ✦ Worshiping God ✦ Proclaiming the Gospel
✦ Nurturing faith ✦ Educating ✦ Loving and Caring for people*



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Good Shepherd Sunday
MAY 3, A.D. 2020

AS WE GATHER— Although we “were straying like sheep,” the Lord Jesus Christ has willingly suffered and died for us, bearing our sins “in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24–25). We are healed by His wounds (1 Peter 2:24), and in His resurrection He gathers us to Himself as our Good Shepherd, by whose righteousness we “have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Now through other shepherds whom He calls and sends in His name, He guards and keeps us in the green pastures of His Church, leading us beside the quiet waters of our Baptism and spreading the feast of His table before us. Since He has called us by the Gospel to be His own dear sheep, we also “hear his voice” and “know his voice” (John 10:3–4) in the faithful preaching of His Gospel, and we follow Him by faith. When we receive His Gospel, we have the abundant life and common unity of the entire flock under one Good Shepherd, in “the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship” and in “the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).



COLLECT OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 2:42–47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple

together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

PSALM

Dominus Regit Me

Psalm 23 (KJV)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

EPISTLE

1 Peter 2:19–25

This is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might

die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

GOSPEL

John 10:1–10

[Jesus said:] “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and 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.”



Zion Parishioner Chris Knepper is preparing for the Office of the Holy Ministry at Concordia New York (Bronxville). As a **pre-Seminarian**, he is receiving **Fieldwork** credit for labouring at Zion. He has been appropriately invited to offer the **Homily** for Easter IV, May 3, A.D. 2020.

He does so with the blessing of Zion's Head Elder, Mr. William Huber and that of his Field Work Supervisor, The Rev. Dr. Joshua D. Hollman of New York. Zion's Senior Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Preece is honoured to be likewise fully supportive of his endeavor.

May God, the Holy Spirit bless his work as we welcome him to a Zion Lectern for the Proclamation of the Gospel.



HOMILY

Text: John 10:1–10
LCMS pre-Seminarian Chris Knepper

The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, The Love of God, and The Unity of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Say it with me: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

If there is no other good news you hear today, hear that reality; that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, is indeed risen from the dead!

Trust me I get it, in our current world, where the only thing some of us can think of is how badly we want to get back to our favorite restaurant, the Good Shepherd can feel a bit socially distant. But know this: the Good Shepherd is alive and with us just as much as ever. In a world riddled with death, our Good Shepherd still takes us by the hand and lays us down in living green pastures. When we hear the turbulence of the outside and the turmoil of politicians, our Good Shepherd continues to lead us by still waters. When we hear of this virus, swarming through our communities, destroying our bodies; the Good Shepherd unceasingly restores souls. We indeed walk through a valley of a shadow of death right now, but we need not fear. For we are not a people who becomes crippled by the

powers of death; we are a people of faith in the resurrection. We are a people who at all times and in all places look into a terrified world and say, "I know the pain you are going through, but I also know that my Redeemer lives, and as He lives, so will we."

In these unordinary times, were we must be socially distant from each other, our hope and promise is that the Good Shepherd is never socially distant. The Good Shepherd draws near to his sheep; those sheep who stick with the flock, but also those sheep who stray away. But make no mistake, although these are unordinary times, we have no ordinary Shepard; we have the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd sacrifices himself not only for the good of his flock, but he sacrifices himself for all sheep. As members of Christ's flock, we too are called to his example of sacrifice. The disciples understood what it meant to be part of the Good Shepherd's unordinary flock. They understood that to be part of this unordinary flock, there would be unordinary sacrifice, not just for the sake of their community, but for the sake of the world community.

It began with an unordinary sacrifice of their time, to devote themselves to teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. It continued with an unordinary sacrifice to make sure all in their community were taken care of. The young and the old, those new to the faith and those who were born into it, the rich and the poor, those of the faith, and even those not of the faith; it doesn't matter. All were to be cared for. The Good Shepherd calls out to his sheep and leads them to care for all in their community. In the midst of all of this unordinary care, we know they continued to thank God for the blessing of all people. From this unordinary care for their community, the Good Shepherd, Our Lord, increased daily the number who were saved.

Just because our Church doors are closed, and we are not able to gather around the altar and each other as a community of faith, the Good Shepherd is still at work calling His flock, us, to care for the community he has entrusted us to care for. The Good Shepherd, by the grace of God, through us, is still caring for souls day in and day out. This week ask yourself, "How is the Good Shepherd going to use me to care for his flock?" Maybe it's something as simple as picking up the phone and asking someone how they are doing. Maybe it's making sure you only take enough groceries for you and your family and ensuring that all have a portion of God's bounty. Maybe it's foregoing the haircut but making sure the barber still has food on their table. Maybe it's taking a few extra minutes to pray for our world, our leaders, and our community.

Whatever God is calling you to do, know this; we are of an unordinary flock, with an unordinary Shepherd, who grants us unordinary hope. No matter how bad things may get, we have hope that our Good Shepherd is risen and lives, and through this we too are resurrected and called to rise above all of the noise that the world throws at us. We are called. Listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd that calls us in the midst of unordinary time to love all of his sheep in unordinary ways.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

