

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

By This We Know Love

April 25, 2021



AS WE GATHER

We hear so many mixed messages of what love is. Popular songs from the past decades or even more contemporary ones tell of what love can and should be; poems, memes, and other influences also are commonly read and seen; even our own emotions and feelings strive to tell us what love is and should feel like. Despite all these mixed messages, our Lord tells us how we are to know real and perfect love. In our Epistle we hear, “By this we know love, that Jesus laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16). Today, we focus on the fact that as our Good Shepherd, Jesus has laid down His life for His sheep. By that sacrifice on the cross and Easter victory, we can rejoice in a perfect love that lasts and an unconditional love that forgives as our Good Shepherd continues to guide, lead, and direct us through all our days.

✠ PREPARATION ✠

HYMN “Lamb of God” #550

INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *1 John 3:16a, 24; John 10:11, adapted*

Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen!
People: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Leader: By this we know love,
People: **that He laid down His life for us.**

Leader: “I am the good shepherd,” says the Lord.
People: **The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**

Leader: Whoever keeps His commandments abides in God, and God in him.
People: **And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalms 23; John 10:11*

Leader: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

People: Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd, we confess to You that we have been ungrateful for all You give us to sustain our bodies and lives. Forgive us, Good Shepherd.

Leader: He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

People: Like sheep, we are distracted and tend to wander and scatter. We forget who we are as baptized children of God and fail to respond to Your shepherding in our lives. Forgive us, Good Shepherd.

Leader: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

People: We confess that in difficult times of life, we sometimes struggle to be confident in Your presence and protection, seeking to find our own comfort. Forgive us, Good Shepherd.

Leader: 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 forever.

People: As we journey through this sinful world, we overlook the goodness and mercy that flow into our lives from You. Forgive us, Good Shepherd.

Leader: Jesus, our Good Shepherd, hears our cries and says to us, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." Receive the forgiveness won for You through Christ's laying down His life and rising from death in victory. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

HYMN OF PRAISE

"Have No Fear, Little Flock"

#735

✠ WORD ✠

SALUTATION

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: Let us pray.

Risen Lord, You are the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. They are Yours, and nothing will snatch them from Your hand. In the love You've shown and the perfect love we know through Your Spirit, empower Your flock to reach others, that all may be guided by Your shepherding grace; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 4:1–12 (Peter and John witness before the council.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL *adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

Christ has risen from the dead.

God the Father has crowned Him with glory and honor,
He has given Him dominion over the works of His hands;
He has put all things under His feet.

EPISTLE 1 John 3:16–24 (Love one another.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Romans 6:9; John 10:14*

Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. Alleluia. I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL John 10:11–18 (Jesus the Good Shepherd)

Leader: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the tenth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" #740

SERMON "Eccentric" Pastor Pete

CREED *Apostles' Creed found in back of hymnal*

OFFERING & PRAYER

(Members and Visitors: We would appreciate it if you would please take this time to fill out and pass the "Who's In The Pew" folders, located at the center aisle end of each pew.)

Leader: Gracious God, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – ourselves, our time, and our possessions, symbols of your gracious love.

People: Receive them for the sake of Him who offered Himself for us, Jesus Christ, our brother and Lord.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Leader: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

You are the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for us out of love. Help us to hear Your voice, follow where You lead, and receive what You provide through Your grace and mercy; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times we fear our enemies and the powers against us, remind us that we belong to You and no one can snatch us from Your hand. We bring before the Lord the part of Your flock here in this place and others whom we love in their time of need, [*especially . . .*]. Carry them as lambs in a shepherd's arms through the difficult paths ahead. Give all wisdom to know the faithful path we are to take, and shepherd us through every trial, trouble, and temptation; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Give us courage that we not live in captivity to our fears; guide those who lead us in this and every land; provide peace, justice, and freedom for people everywhere. In our busy days, give us time to reflect upon the goodness of God and to experience joy in the security and peace You provide us, that we find contentment and peace in You; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Protect and defend the members of our armed forces and the public workers who keep our communities safe. Defend us from our enemies, and teach us to rely on Your provision, the true protector of us all; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Leader: That we do not forget those in need but share with all the Lord has entrusted to us and to display the kind of love shown and known that has no end; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Good Shepherd and Lord, have mercy.

Additional petitions may follow.

Leader: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Your Son, the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

Leader: We sing our Lord's Prayer:

"Lord's Prayer"

HFG 440

**Our Father, which 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 debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the Kingdom,
and the Power and the Glory forever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
People: **Amen.**

HYMN “Lord of All Hopefulness” #738

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Holy Communion is shared on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month.