

St Paul United Church of Christ
5312 Old Blue Rock Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247
Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor
Order of Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Easter
Good Shepherd Sunday
April 25, 2021

(Although we are now *holding worship in our building*, we are conscious of the ongoing challenge of in-person worship while the coronavirus persists, and the need many feel to avoid the possibility of contagion. Therefore, we will be continuing the practice of sending a worship bulletin to all who are on our mailing lists for email or hard copy. Those who will be worshipping from home and who have computer access will also be receiving a recorded version of the service that will be sent out by email on Sunday afternoon and also can be seen on our Facebook page. We welcome your participation in any way that is convenient for you, and we encourage you to share our worship service with any person you know who may appreciate receiving it.)

Morning Announcements and Prayer Requests

Prelude (recording begins)

Call to Worship from Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

We worship you with gladness; we come into your presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God. It is God who made us and we belong to God.

We are your people, and the sheep of your pasture.

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving, and God's courts with praise.

We give thanks to you and bless your name.

For the Lord is good;

Your steadfast love endures forever, and your faithfulness to all generations.

***Hymn**

"All People That on Earth Do Dwell"

#661

***All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
God serve with joy, God's praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice.***

***Know that the Lord is God indeed; without our aid he did us make;
We are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take.***

***O enter then God's gates with praise, approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud and bless his name always, for it is seemly so to do.***

***For why? The Lord our God is good, God's mercy is forever sure;
God's truth at all times firmly stood, and shall from age to age endure.***

Psalm 23 (RSV) In Unison

*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 paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I 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 my enemies;
Thou anointest 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.*

Hymn

"The Lord My Shepherd Guards Me Well"

#73

*The Lord my Shepherd guards me well, and all my wants are fed:
amid green pastures made to lie, beside still waters led.
My careworn soul grows strong and whole when God's true path I tread.*

*Though I should walk in darkest ways, through valleys like the grave,
no evil shall I ever fear; your presence makes me brave.
On my behalf your rod and staff assure me you will save.*

*For me a table has been spread where all my foes can see;
you bathe my head with fragrant oil to soothe and honor me.
My heart and cup are both filled up with joyful ecstasy.*

*Your steadfast love will follow me to shield me all my days
and bring me to your holy house, redeemed from error's ways,
my whole life long to join the song of those who sing God's praise.*

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, shepherd of our souls, may your presence be known among us. We gather as those who have been called by you, as those who have heard your voice and recognized the gracious invitation. May the fellowship of this holy place be inspired by your love, so that each of us may become bearers of shepherding care for one another and the world. Amen.

Epistle Lesson:

1 John 3:16-24

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.

Gospel Lesson: John 10:11-16

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.

Hymn*“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”****#440**

***Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care;
in thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are;
blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.***

***We are thine, do thou befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
keep thy flock from sin, defend us, seek us when we go astray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray.***

***Thou hast promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and power to free:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to thee;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to thee.***

*Early let us seek thy favor, early let us do thy will;
blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our bosoms fill:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still.*

Sermon

Pastor Allen

Musical Interlude

Pastoral Prayer

As Jesus has taught us, so we pray:

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 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.**

Closing Hymn

"Go, My Children, with My Blessing"

#719

*Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river, I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing - you are my own.*

*Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story; here you touched him, saw his glory,
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.*

*Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.*

*I, the Lord, will bless and keep you and give you peace.
I, the Lord, will smile upon you and give you peace.
I, the Lord, will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children, I will keep you and give you peace.*

Benediction

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Postlude