

**Sunday, April 25, 2021 ~ Fourth Sunday of Easter**

*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. These images in our readings today, also remind us of God's great love for creation. We give thanks for Bishop Elizabeth Eaton who proclaims the word for us today.*

Prelude: Sheep May Safely Graze

J. S. Bach

Gathering Words/Welcome and Announcements

### **SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER**

*Create a focal point for worship in your home in the Easter season. Add an Alleluia, maybe your Easter bells, or fresh flowers. In addition to these items, a candle and bowl of water remind us of the new life we have received through our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection and our call to let our Christ light shine! Christ is with us wherever we gather, and by God's love and grace, we are one in Christ, across time and space. Throughout our worship, ring your bells each time you hear, speak, or sing the word "Alleluia!"*

Thanksgiving for Baptism:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

We thank you, risen Christ,

**for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.**

We bless you, risen Christ,

**that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers.**

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.

**Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.**

Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

**Make us one, risen Christ.**

Cleanse our hearts.

**Shower us with life.**

To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Greet those with whom you worship physically with a sign of peace, extend the peace of Christ through the comments section or text to those who are at a distance.*

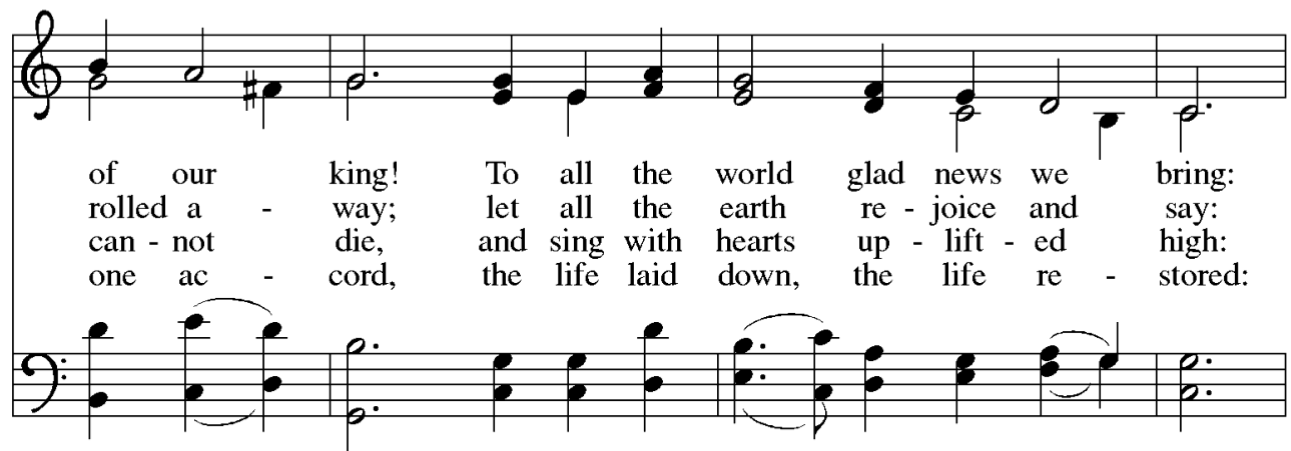
Gathering Hymn:

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!*

#385



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice and sing! Now is the tri - umph  
2 The Lord of life is ris'n this day; death's might - y stone is  
3 Praise we in songs of vic - to - ry that love, that life which  
4 Your name we bless, O ris - en Lord, and sing to - day with



of our king! To all the world glad news we bring:  
rolled a - way; let all the earth re - joice and say:  
can - not die, and sing with hearts up - lift - ed high:  
one ac - cord, the life laid down, the life re - stored:



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Cyril A. Alington, 1872–1955, alt.

Music: GELOBT SEI GOTT, Melchior Vulpus, 1570–1615

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Greeting and Prayer of the Day:

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.**

Let us pray. 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.**

Children's Moment: **Psalm 23 Video** used by permission (see last page for details)

## **WE HEAR GOD'S WORD**

### **Psalm 23**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures

and leads me beside still waters.

<sup>3</sup>You restore my soul, O LORD,

and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

### **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.*

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

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

<sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation:



The gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Gospel: John 10:11-18**

*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:] <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No 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.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day:

*There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

#587

*(music on the following page)*



- 1 There's a wide-ness
- 2 There is wel-come
- 3 For the love of
- 4 'Tis not all we



in God's mer - cy, like the wide - ness of the sea;  
 for the sin - ner, and a prom - ised grace made good;  
 God is broad - er than the mea - sures of our mind;  
 owe to Je - sus; it is some - thing more than all:



there's a kind - ness in God's jus - tice which is more than  
 there is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; there is heal - ing  
 and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der -  
 great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy



lib - er - ty. There is no place where earth's sor - rows  
 in his blood. There is grace e - nough for thou - sands  
 ful - ly kind. But we make this love too nar - row  
 through the fall. Make our love, O God, more faith - ful;



are more felt than up in heav'n. There is no place  
 of new worlds as great as this; there is room for  
 by false lim - its of our own; and we mag - ni -  
 let us take you at your word, and our lives will



where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment giv'n.  
 fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss.  
 fy its strict - ness with a zeal God will not own.  
 be thanks-giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.

The Apostles' Creed:

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Offering

*Though we meet virtually, the ministry of God's people at BLC continues. Our worship is complete when we bring all of our resources to receive God's blessing and fulfill God's purpose. This time of uncertainty and reduced physical contact gives us ever more opportunities to share our abundance – of compassion, of time, and of material resources. If you are able, please continue your financial commitment to BLC.*

*If you would like to make a one-time gift electronically, scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page. For recurring gifts, download the Tithe.ly app. Checks may also be mailed to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450.*



*Whatever form your offering takes, we give thanks to God for you and your generosity.*

Offering of Music:

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

*Chancel Bells (Director, Annette Finkbeiner)*

arr. Jason Krug

How can an - y praise we of - fer mea - sure all the

thanks we owe? Take our hearts and hands and voic - es

gifts of love we can be - stow. Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Tri - une God, to you we sing!

Offertory Prayer:

Let us pray. Loving Creator,  
**you brought us forth from the very earth itself. We share with others what you have entrusted to us. Bless these offerings, and compel us to use them not only to serve our human neighbors, but also to serve our sister sky, our brother mountain, our mother earth, and all our family in Creation. We pray this in the name of the Word that dwells among us. Amen**

The Prayers of the People:

*In the silences of our prayer you are encouraged to remember those whose needs are known to us listed below. You may also lift up the name of someone in need of prayer in the comments of our worship livestream.*

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

*Brief silence*

Creator God, we pray for the world, where people are hungry and homeless, where people hunger after justice, freedom and peace. With love and mercy, help us to feed and care for your lambs. Hear us O God,  
**Your mercy is great.**

Almighty Father, you are everywhere. You are in the soil that holds the seed. You are in the tree, the flower, the food that grows. You are in the rock, the sand, the mountain, the river. You are in the bird, the animal, the worm, the fish. You are in the rain and in the sun. You are in me. You have given us a choice: to grow the gifts You've given, or to squander them. You gave us your Love. You gave us Your Son. You gave us Your Holy Spirit. You gave us this Earth. Help us to see you everywhere. In seeing you everywhere, we will respect every life. Hear us O God,  
**Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks that you see us and know our needs. Today we pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Glen & Jane, Marcy & Tom, Mark & Leslie (Tyler, Avery & James), Brian & Melissa (Delaney, Noah & Emelia), Tom & Karen. We also pray for our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Hear us, O God,  
**Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you know our needs better than we ourselves. Hear the prayers that we offer you now.

*We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:*

- The birth of Ethan born 3/28. Ethan is the son of David and Amy and little brother to Stella

*We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:*

- Karen (friend of Carol) who died on 4/9
- Steve who died from a heart attack
- We pray for our sisters and brothers in Christ at the Roman Catholic parishes of Assumption and Resurrection as they grieve the death of their priest, Father George, on 4/16
- Gary (who was the husband of Marilyn, a coworker of Mike) who died on 4/8



*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Skip, friend of the Purvis families, who suffered a stroke last week
- Waverly, friend of Phyllis as she seeks a kidney donor
- Those who are involved with the ongoing work of caregiving for loved ones
- Those who are infected with or recovering from Coronavirus, and their caregivers
  - Michele & Joe (friends of Donna & Jim)

Hear also these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Long silence.*

Hear us, O God;  
**Your mercy is great.**

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 Lord.

**Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer:

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**


Benediction:

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

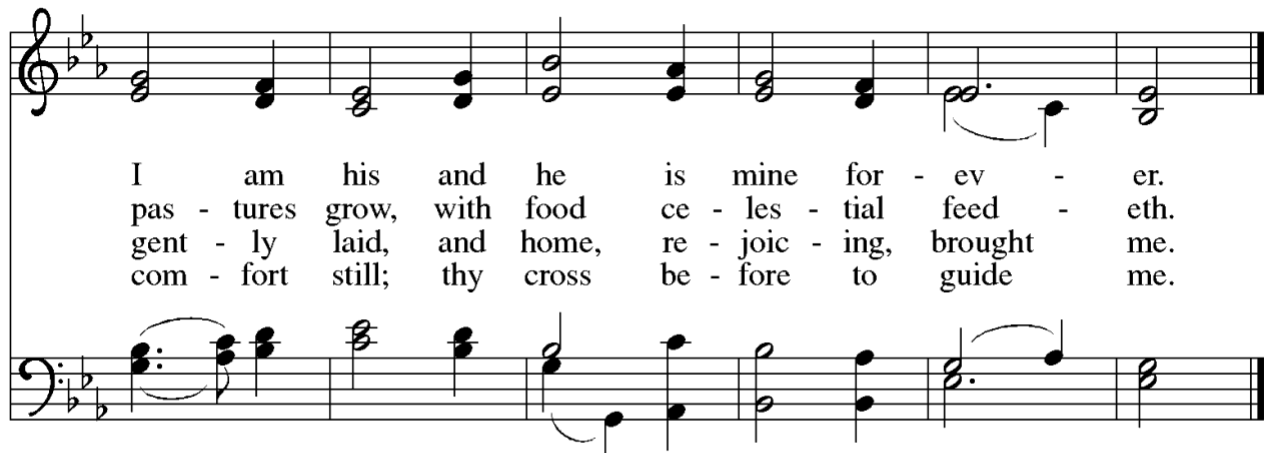
**Amen**



1 The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness  
 2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my ran - somed  
 3 Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but yet in  
 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear



fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if  
 soul he lead - eth and, where the ver - dant  
 love he sought me, and on his shoul - der  
 Lord, be - side me, thy rod and staff my



I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.  
 pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feed - eth.  
 gent - ly laid, and home, re - joic - ing, brought me.  
 com - fort still; thy cross be - fore to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;  
 thine unction grace bestoweth;  
 and, oh, what transport of delight  
 from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,  
 thy goodness faileth never.  
 Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
 within thy house forever.

Dismissal:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

Postlude: Postlude on “Gaudeamus pariter” (ELW #363)

Robert Buckley Farlee

## Calendar for week of April 25 – May 2

(Last updated on 4/21/21 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

### Sunday, April 25

8:30 am Facebook  
Livestream Worship  
10:00 am Listening Session at  
Egypt Park (registration  
required)  
4:00 pm Confirmation/LYO  
Listening Session at Egypt Park  
(registration required)  
*No LYO today*

### Monday, April 26

6:00 pm Virtual Youth Choir  
([Join](#) or use ID 816 9461 2911)  
6:30 pm BSA Troop 208  
7:00 pm Zoom\* GFL  
Confirmation  
([Join](#) or use ID 859 4816 8778)

### Tuesday, April 27

6:30 pm BSA Troop 2019  
6:30 pm Virtual Re-Opening  
Team  
([Join](#) or use ID 824 6235 3239)  
7:30 pm 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Committee Meeting

### Wednesday, April 28

9:30 am Zoom\* Bible Study  
([Join](#) or use ID 943 3691 2942)  
9:30 am Education Planning  
Meeting  
([Join](#) or use ID 871 8823 9638)  
6:30 pm Chancel Bells  
7:30 pm Zoom\* Chancel Choir  
Rehearsal  
([Join](#) or use ID 869 2314 9200)

### Thursday, April 29

### Friday, April 30

#### **Pastor's Sabbath**

10:00 am Folk Group Rehearsal  
3:00 pm Dulcimer Group  
Rehearsal

### Saturday, May 1

9:00 am Data Analysis Meeting

### Sunday, May 2

8:30 am Facebook  
Livestream  
Worship followed by Holy  
Communion – the sanctuary  
will be open for people to  
receive communion until 11 am  
7:30 pm Zoom\* LYO  
([Join](#) or use ID 818 2417 6546)

**For additional details** about any of the meetings, events and activities listed above contact the church office!

**Church Office Hours:** We continue to hold remote office hours M-F from 9 am to 12 noon. During these times, please call (585) 223-0634 to reach us directly, otherwise you may continue to email us at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) and we'll respond as we're able. For further assistance or urgent pastoral care needs outside of office hours, please call the office and leave a message on the pastoral care line. Pastor Amy remains available by phone and email at other times.

**\*To join any of our BLC Zoom meetings, use the ID provided or contact the church office and/or group organizer.**

**\*Zoom Options:** For recurring meetings, the info will remain the same each time. Participants can join with the link provided (above where applicable, or via email), or by using the Meeting ID and manually enter the password (the 10-digit BLC phone number with area code, no spaces or hyphens). **Please contact the group leader or the church office for assistance or additional details! If you have trouble accessing a Zoom meeting in real-time, you can call or text (585) 364-2129 for assistance.**

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## Life Laid Down

How does faith in the risen Christ call one to live? What shape does one's life take?

The readings for this fourth Sunday of Easter are rich in their imagery, and at the center is the image of the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Five times in eight short verses Jesus mentions laying down his life for the sake of the sheep.

The First Letter of John picks up the same theme: "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?" (1 John 3:16-17). Laying down one's life for another might take many forms, but it at least means this: extending help, as much as you are able, when another is in need.

A friend tells the story of her grandfather, a faithful man who earned a modest income. Each year when tax time rolled around, he was audited. According to tax records he earned so little and gave away so much. The astounded auditors questioned him, wondering why he gave so much of his income to the church. Incredulous, he responded, "You can't outgive God."

The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and joined to the risen life of Christ, the lives of the baptized are shaped by generosity and sacrifice. Giving one's life, resources, gifts, or whatever one holds most dear for the sake of another is both a witness to the love we have first been shown and an act of faith. Hearing Jesus' words in this Easter season reminds us that laying down one's life is not an act to be feared; rather, it is an act that defies death, as we trust that, washed in the waters of baptism, we already live in the resurrected life of Christ.

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