



Sunday, April 21, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter



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The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Sunday, April 21, 2024 ~ *Fourth Sunday of Easter*

PRELUDE

O Jesus, King Most Wonderful
(HIDING PLACE)

Dale Wood
from *Christian Lyre*, 1831

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 23, A New Zealand Prayer Book)

The Lord is my shepherd:

therefore can I lack nothing.

You Lord make me lie down in green pastures:

and lead me beside the waters of peace.

You revive my spirit:

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

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 are my comfort.

You spread a table for in the sight of my enemies:

you have anointed my head with oil and my cup is overflowing.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

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

GREETING

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

When God Made Me

Neil Young

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

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 [the] 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 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.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The holy 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:] ¹¹“I 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.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

ELW 502

All: sts. 1, 3, 5, 6

Choir: sts. 2, 4

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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

A brief silence.

#1 Nurturing God, preserve the health of biomes and ecosystems. Inspire scientists, researchers, conservation organizations, and all people entrusted with the task of caring for creation, that we may be better stewards of the world around us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#2 Almighty God, lead nations and communities to share resources, cooperate in solving conflicts, and listen to the wisdom of Indigenous peoples. Help all those with power to share it and to use such power for good. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#3 Loving God, protect the very young and the very old, those living without housing, victims of domestic abuse, and all who live with chronic illness or compromised immune systems. Guide communities to actively care for people who are vulnerable. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you make all things new. Strengthen and renew the relationships we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Cole, Jared, Kim, Mackenzie, and Don & Sue (Tor). Bring new life and growth to the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Breathe new life into those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

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

- Wayne O, father-in-law of Mary O, who died 4/8
- Joanne S, former Learning Links tutor, who died 4/4
- Dale R who died on 4/5

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Art W, who is recovering from a recent hospitalization
- Roberta B, sister of CarolynAnn S, who is recovering from surgery
- Warren H, friend of Jim and Kathy M

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

Silence for individual prayer.

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.
Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Laudate Dominum, K. 339
(Praise the Lord)

Psalm 117
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

The Chancel Choir

Latin Text

*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes,
laudate eum, omnes populi.
Quoniam confirmata est
super nos misericordia eius,
et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.*


*Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper.
et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.*

English Translation

*Praise the Lord, all ye nations,
praise Him, all ye people.
For He has bestowed
His mercy upon us,
and the truth of the Lord endures forever.*

*Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and forever,
and for generations of generations.
Amen.*

OFFERTORY



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Risen One,

you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

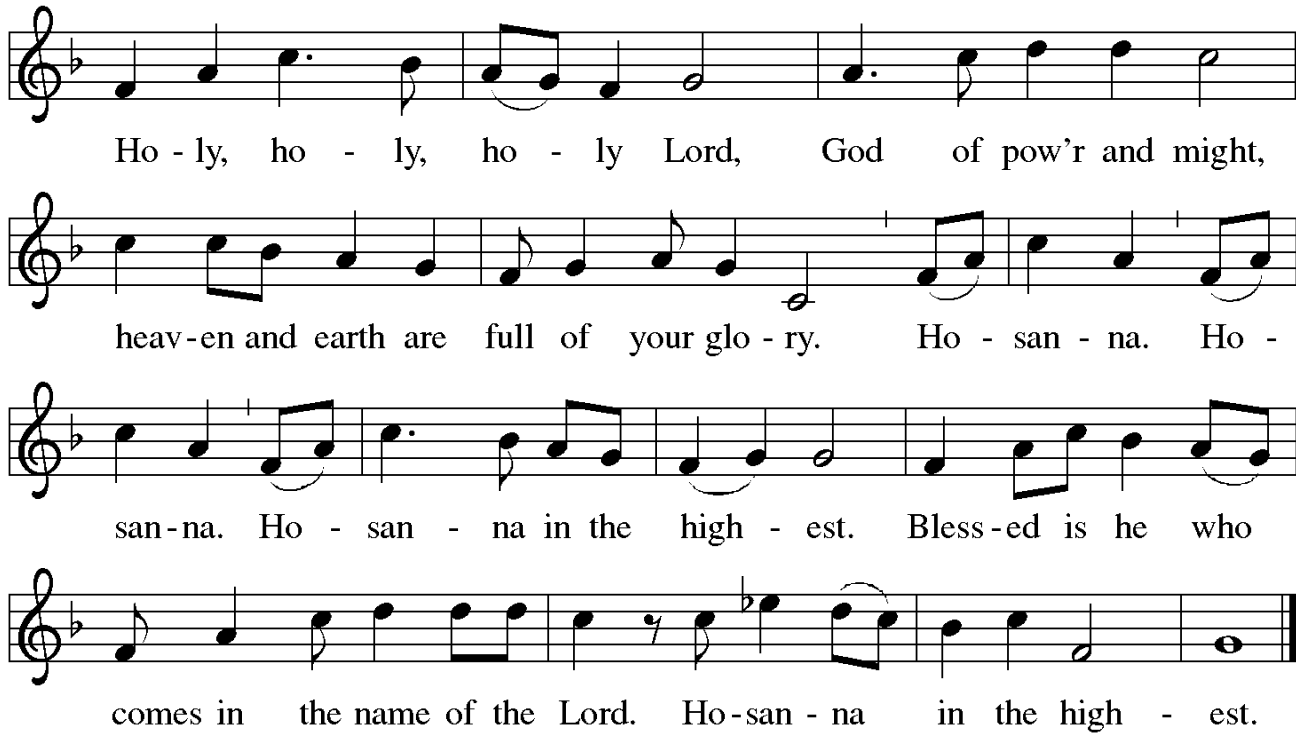
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We 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**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat.
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

ELW 484

The Lord's My Shepherd

ELW 778

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom-is - es and lead your peo-ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks-giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope ✠ bless you now and always.

Amen.

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------|---------|
| SENDING HYMN | This Joyful Eastertide | ELW 391 |
|--------------|------------------------|---------|

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Go in peace!

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Festival Alleluia

(Lasst Uns Erfreuen)

Dan Miller

17th-cent. German hymn tune

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

Donna Berner, vocals

James Berner, guitar

Sue Cardinal, flute

Katherine Jefferis, mezzo-soprano

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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“When God Made Me” Words and Music: Neil Young; © 2005 Silver Fiddle Music (admin. Wixen Music Publishing)

“Laudate Dominum” (from *Vesperae solennes de confessore* K. 339); Text: Psalm 117; Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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“Festival Alleluia” – based on *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*; Music: Dan Miller; © 1999 MorningStar Music Publishers

Life Laid Down

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.