

JOY IN BELONGING: THE GOOD SHEPHERD
WORSHIP OF WORD & SACRAMENT APRIL 21, 2024

The assembly is invited to speak as one where the words are in **bold** print.

WELCOME & CENTERING

THE GATHERING:

We are people created, chosen by God. Then we're washed ever gently, in mercy and love. Sin has power no more, Jesus opened the door to a fountain bringing healing and wholeness and more...

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM:

Water! Water! We praise you, O God, for water—the Mississippi, Missouri, & Meramec Rivers the rain that nourishes animals and plants, the water for drinking and bathing. We praise you, O God, for water. **We praise you, O God, for water.**

We praise you, O God, for our water stories— a flood that cleansed the earth, the sea that drowned the enemy, a river that healed leprosy. We praise you, O God, for water. **We praise you, O God, for water.**

We remember the waters of Jesus— baptized in the Jordan River, calming the Sea of Galilee, drinking from Jacob's Well, healing at the pool of Bethesda, washing the disciples' feet. We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for this font, for through this water you have birthed us into the family of Christ, bathed us in forgiveness, and enlivened us in the Spirit. We praise you, O God, for baptism. **We praise you, O God, for baptism.**

O God, you are the Ocean, sustaining this earth. O God, you are the River, saving us from death. O God, you are the Fountain, granting us health and well-being. We praise you, O God, today, tomorrow, forever. Amen, and amen. **Amen, and amen.**

OPENING SONG: BE NOT AFRAID (SUNG 2 TIMES)

ELW 388

OPENING PRAYER:

Loving Shepherd, you know our names; you care for us. When we face darkness and death, walk beside us. When we hunger for your love, fill us with your presence. When we are fearful, feed us at your table. May we dwell in the house of goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. ¹
Amen.

THE WORD

We are fed and we're nourished, filled and refreshed. Then our hunger returns and again we are blessed. For whatever the need, God is greater indeed: endless ocean, always deeper, than all of our needs.

READING: JOHN 10:11-18

**Near the end of the reading, God is referred to as Father. I've notated Parent as a nonbinary option for those who may struggle with Father.*

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² When the hired hand sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. That's because he isn't the shepherd; the sheep aren't really his. So the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ He's only a hired hand and the sheep don't matter to him.

¹ ~ written by Mary Petrina Boyd, and posted on **Ministry Matters**. <http://www.ministrymatters.com/>

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd. I know my own sheep and they know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father/Parent knows me and I know the Father/Parent. I give up my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that don't belong to this sheep pen. I must lead them too. They will listen to my voice and there will be one flock, with one shepherd. ¹⁷ "This is why the Father/Parent loves me: I give up my life so that I can take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I give it up because I want to. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it up again. I received this commandment from my Father/Parent."

REFLECTION: WHAT A SHEPHERD DOES

Where do you see/hear joy in this text?

Where do you see/hear belonging?

Why is knowing important in this text?

We don't know shepherds in our everyday lives. How would you update the metaphor to make this text make 'sense'?

SONG: THE KING OF LOVE MY SHEPHERD IS

ELW 502

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

For who or what do you give joy, thanks, or have concern?

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.

Shepherding God, gather your church whenever we wander from you and one another. Empower our church in ministries around the world to worship and serve alongside global companions as equal partners and coworkers in the gospel. God of grace,

HEAR OUR PRAYER.

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.

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.

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.

Gracious God, help this and all communities of faith to listen for your voice. Call us away from things that distract us from following you. Invite us to more deeply love and serve people who are lonely, isolated, and on the margins. God of grace,

HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Living God, we give thanks for our ancestors in faith (*INCLUDING ANSELM OF CANTERBURY AND ALL WHO LABORED TO HELP GENERATIONS UNDERSTAND THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL*). Strengthen us to share the good news in our own day. 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father(Parent) 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

THE SENDING:

Now with praise and thanksgiving, we join the song. All are welcome! We gather to sing loud and strong. Not enslaved but set free! From now on, all will be one in Jesus, one in water, baptized and set free!

BENEDICTION:

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

SENDING HYMN: CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY. ALLELUIA!

ELW 369

SENDING: ALLELUIA! GO IN PEACE. REJOICE AND BE GLAD. THANKS BE TO GOD. ALLELUIA!