

Epiphany Lutheran Church
Fourth Sunday of Easter
ELW Holy Communion Setting Three
Sunday, April 21, 2024

Introduction to the day

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

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING SONG *God Is Here!* (ELW 526)

1 God is here! As we your people
meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure
what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit
into open minds and hearts.

2 Here are symbols to remind us
of our lifelong need of grace;
here are table, font, and pulpit;
here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching,
here in silence, as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal,
God the Spirit comes to each.

3 Here our children find a welcome
in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here as bread and wine are taken,
Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant
seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living
to believe and to adore.

4 Lord of all, of church and kingdom,
in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel;
help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
all we have to give, receive;
we, who cannot live without you,
we adore you! We believe!

GREETING (ELW p. 138)

He is Risen
He is Risen indeed, Alleluia.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (ELW p. 146)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 139)

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich-es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of

God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon-or,

glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was
 slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.
 Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 142)

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.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Acts 4:5-12

A reading from Acts.

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.

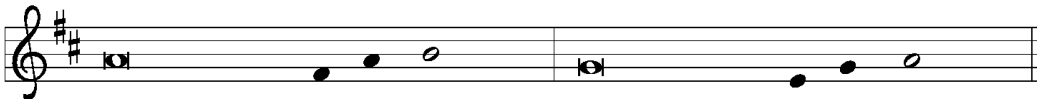
⁵The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸Then 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.

PSALM: Psalm 23



Refrain:

*The LORD¹ is my shepherd;
I shall not¹ be in want.*

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴**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. R**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. R**

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:16-24

A reading from 1 John.

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.

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

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

²³And 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. ²⁴All 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 (ELW p. 142)

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.

GOSPEL: John 10:11-18

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 (ELW p. 143)

HYMN OF THE DAY: We are One in the Spirit (They'll Know We Are Christians)



1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are
 2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will
 3. We will work with each oth - er, we will
 4. All praise to the Fa - ther, from



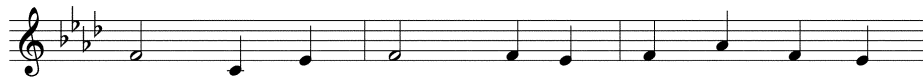
one in the Lord, We are one in the
 walk hand in hand, We will walk with each
 work side by side, We will work with each
 whom all things come, And all praise to Christ



Spir - it, we are one in the Lord, And we
 oth - er, we will walk hand in hand, And to -
 oth - er, we will work side by side, And we'll
 Je - sus, his on - ly Son, And all



pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re -
 geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our
 guard hu - man's dig - ni - ty and save hu - man's
 praise to the Spir - it, who makes us



stored:
 land: And they'll know we are Chris - tians by our
 pride:
 one:



love, by our love, Yes, they'll know we are



Chris - tians by our love.

CREED (ELW p. 104)

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.

*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.

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.

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. We lift up to you all who we pray for, those we name aloud, and those we name in our hearts.

Pause for 5 seconds of silence while names are possibly said

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Living God, we give thanks for our ancestors in faith. 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.

PEACE (ELW p. 143)

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

OFFERING *We Plow the Fields and Scatter* (ELW 681)

1 We plow the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand,
who sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.

Refrain

All good gifts around us
are sent from heav'n above.
We thank you, Lord,
we thank you, Lord,
for all your love.

2 You only are the maker
of all things near and far.
You paint the wayside flower,
you light the evening star.
The winds and waves obey you,
by you the birds are fed;
much more to us, your children,
you give our daily bread. Refrain

3 We thank you, our creator,
for all things bright and good,
the seedtime and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food.
No gifts have we to offer
for all your love imparts,
but what you most would treasure--
our humble, thankful hearts. Refrain

OFFERING PRAYER

God of good gifts,
receive these and all our offerings
as we present them in faithful service
for the sake of your gospel.
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal
as you pour out your very presence
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.
Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

O god of justice and love,
we give thanks to you that you illumine our
way through life with the words of your Son.

Give us the light we need
awaken us to the needs of others,
and at the end bring all the world to your feast;
through Jesus Christ,
our Saviour and Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 145)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *God Be with You Till We Meet Again* (ELW 536)

1 God be with you till we meet again;
by good counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain

Till we meet, (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet again,)
till we meet at Jesus' feet; (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet again.)
God be with you till we meet again.

2 God be with you till we meet again;
holy wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again. Refrain

3 God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again. Refrain

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

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As the Grains of Wheat

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Now We Join in Celebration

Text: Joel W. Lundeen. 1918-1990

Music: Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

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God is Here!

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