

Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

The
sheep
follow
him
because
they
know
his
voice.

John 10:4, NRSV



✠ Holy Communion ✠
Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 26, 2026

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Today is sometimes called "Good Shepherd Sunday." Jesus is called the "gate" of the sheep in today's gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world's violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God's tender care to all creation.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

The King of Love My Shepherd Is..... Robin Milford
Stand

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

P: Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!

C: Amen.

P: Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font

P: Merciful God,
We thank you for the waters of creation
that nourish us.

P: Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Jesus Christ,
We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection.
Lead us to drink of those waters that gush up to eternal life.

P: Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Holy Spirit,
As once you descended upon our Christ and us at Holy Baptism,
descend upon us once again and fill us with the breath of peace.

P: Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism,
and for making us a new creation.

We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise,
now and forever.

C: Amen

GATHERING HYMN

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.....LBW 499



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan - d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end - less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan - d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good - ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.



Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt.
Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

APOSTOLIC GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



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



B Wor- thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo- ple of God. Pow- er and rich- es and wis- dom and



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



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



Sing with all the peo- ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre- a- tion: Bless- ing and hon- or and glo- ry and



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



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be- gun his reign. Al- le- lu- ia. Al- le- lu- ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY**P:** Let us pray.

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen*Sit***WORD****FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47**

Today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

A: A Reading from Acts:

⁴² The baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

A: The word of the Lord.**C: Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 23

The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.



The LORD is my shep-herd; I shall not be in want.

Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.



- 1 The LORD | is my shepherd;
I shall not | be in want.
- 2 **The LORD makes me lie down | in green pastures
and leads me be- | side still waters.**
- 3 You 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**
- 5 You 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 Peter 2:19-25

Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.

A: A Reading from First Peter:

¹⁹ It is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²² “He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

²³ When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have

returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Cantor: Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.* I know my own and my own know me.

C: Repeat the Alleluias.

GOSPEL: John 10:1-10

Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the tenth chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: ¹ "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON Janet Stroble, ALWL

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY

***The Lord's My Shepherd*.....LBW 451**



1 The Lord's my shep-herd; I'll not want. He makes me down to lie
 2 My soul he doth re - store a - gain, and me to walk doth make
 3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear no ill;
 4 My ta - ble thou hast fur - nish - ed in pres - ence of my foes;
 5 Good - ness and mer - cy all my life shall sure - ly fol - low me,



in pas - tures green; he lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
 with - in the paths of righ - teous - ness, e'en for his own name's sake;
 for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me com - fort still;
 my head thou dost with oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
 and in God's house for - ev - er - more my dwell - ing - place shall be;



He lead - eth me, he lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
 with - in the paths of righ - teous - ness, e'en for his own name's sake.
 for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me com - fort still.
 My head thou dost with oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
 and in God's house for - ev - er - more my dwell - ing - place shall be.



Text: *Psalter*, Edinburgh, 1650

Music: BROTHER JAMES' AIR, J. L. Macbeth Bain, c. 1840-1925; arr. Gordon Jacob, 1895-1984

APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again 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**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A brief silence is held after the introduction.

P: Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

After each petition:

P: Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

P: God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

C: Amen

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you.

Sit

MEAL

OFFERING

The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.

ANTHEM

God is My Shepherd.....Pryor/Nolan

Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung

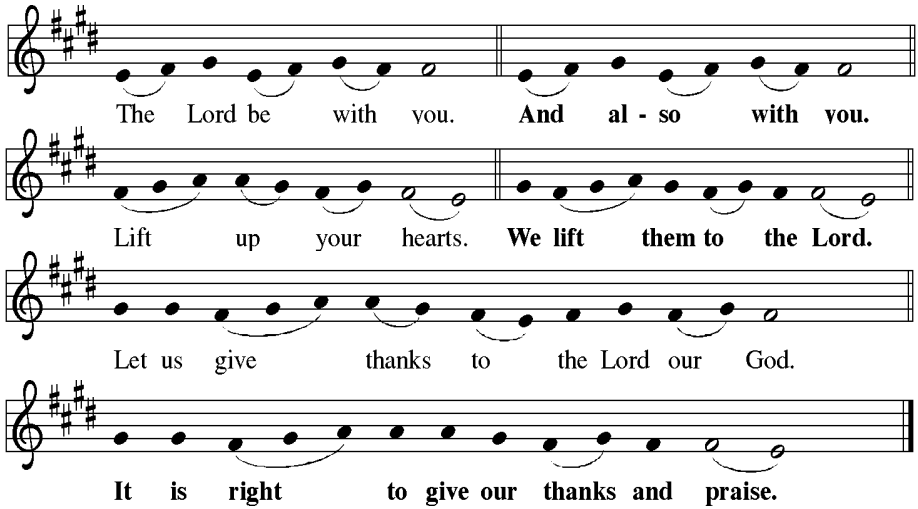
Let the vine- vards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
 bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
 fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
 nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
 pres - ence,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

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

C: Merciful God,
 accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory.
 You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day
 when we will hunger and thirst no more.
 Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus,
 that goodness and mercy may follow us
 and bless the world you love.
 In the name of Jesus,
 Amen

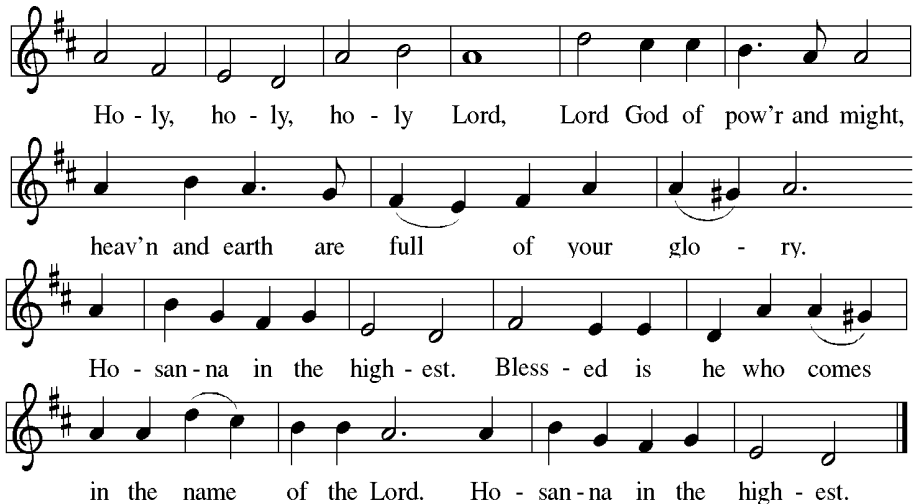
GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so with Mary Magdalene and Peter, and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C: Amen

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come to the table of new life.
Receive the risen Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

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, grant us peace.

Sit

COMMUNION

All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.
The communicant may say: Amen**



COMMUNION HYMN *You Satisfy the Hungry Heart*

Refrain

You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.

Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.

- 1 As when the shep - herd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;
- 2 With joy - ful lips we sing to you our praise and grat - i - tude
- 3 Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ out - poured?
- 4 The mys - t'ry of your pres - ence, Lord, no mor - tal tongue can tell:
- 5 You give your - self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

so when you call your fam - 'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - jice.
 that you should count us wor - thy, Lord, to share this heav' n - ly food.
 Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare our one - ness in the Lord?
 whom all the world can - not con - tain comes in our hearts to dwell.
 to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.

Stand

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

Holy One,
 through this meal you have made your home among us
 and are making all things new.
 Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts,
 to love our enemies,
 and to bring your healing to the nations.
 In the name of Jesus,

C: Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

P: God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end,
 Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead,
 and the Spirit, our advocate and peace,
 † bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

SENDING HYMN

Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing **LBW 196**



1 Praise the Lord, rise up re - joic - ing, wor - ship, thanks, de -
 2 Scat - tered flock, one shep - herd shar - ing, lost and lone - ly,
 3 Sins for - giv - en, wrongs for - giv - ing, we go forth a -



vo - tion voic - ing: glo - ry be to God on high!
 one voice hear - ing, ears at - ten - tive to your word;
 lert and liv - ing in your Spir - it, strong and free.



Christ, your cross and pas - sion shar - ing, by this eu - cha -
 by your blood new life re - ceiv - ing, in your bod - y,
 Part - ners in your new cre - a - tion, seek - ing peace in



rist de - clar - ing yours the fi - nal vic - to - ry.
 firm be - liev - ing, we are yours, and you the Lord.
 ev - `ry na - tion, may we faith - ful fol - l`wers be.

Text: Howard C. A. Gaunt, 1902–1983, alt.
 Music: ALLES IST AN GOITTES SEGEN, Johann Löhner, 1645–1705, adapt.
 Text © Oxford University Press.

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Basse et Dessus de Trompette **Nicola Clerambault**

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Charles Luppert, Larry & Donna Britton, Rhonda Koch, Sylvia McCarty, Larry Solomon; **Lay Assistant:** Carola Storrs

Comm. Asst.: Sherri Holtzman; **Acolyte:** Doriann Morris

Altar Guild: Jody Fullmer, April Gardner

Greeters/Presenters: Howard and Jean Wilt; **Cantor:** Dave Bausinger

Flower Delivery: Charles Luppert; **Guest Organist:** Barbara Hoffman

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Harold C. Kropp by his wife, Martha and family.

The Sanctuary Lamp burns in memory of Lee Waltz.

Please Note that the one **Basket of Flowers last week** was in honor of Kirstin Gist's 35th birthday by her husband and family.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Messiah Church! It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name and information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

This morning we welcome Janet Stroble, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Janet has received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and has been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist.

Tickets are available this morning for the **"WOMEN'S BANQUET"** on Tuesday, May 5 (6:00 p.m.) in Shaheen Hall. It is a "red-white-blue" night with table decorations, a quilt display, and special music geared to America's 250th Anniversary. Ticket prices are ... Adults - \$13.00; Children (age 6 to 12) - \$6.00; Children (age 5 and under) - Free. A challenge ... wear something "patriotic"!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL is right around the corner. If you would like to volunteer to help, please give me a call at 570-244-6964 or call the church office. Even if you can only do it for a day or two, it would be helpful. The theme this year is "Tropical Trek" and it will be held June 15-19 from 9:00-noon. **THINGS WE NEED:** If you have any artificial ivy, ferns or other house plants/trees that we can borrow or have, it would be appreciated (no Christmas trees or evergreen garlands). If you do want them returned, please make sure to put your name on them somewhere. We will also be collecting brown packaging paper like what comes in Amazon shipments. There will be a box put in the alcove near the elevator. More to come.... Thank you in advance, Kathryn Pratt

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

JARED GIST, ORGANIST

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Our Good Shepherd

The images in today's texts provide us with much food for thought and action. Psalm 23 tells of a shepherd who leads us to green pastures and refreshing waters, walks alongside us as we face challenging times, takes us to a table already set, and anoints us with oil to mark each of us as chosen. We are heard, seen, known, valued, and loved, and remain in the Shepherd's presence for all time.

Jesus' words in the gospel reading add to the image of a loving and caring shepherd. The shepherd calls each sheep by name, while the sheep follow because they recognize that voice. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, knows us well and calls each of us by name. Jesus also serves as the gate for the sheep, guarding and protecting us in the sheepfold, while also providing access to pastureland. This protection and access give us the space to be who we are, with no need to play games or pretend to be someone we are not. And when it comes right down to it, the Good Shepherd comes to give us abundant life—new life in relationship with God, others, and all creation.

The reading from Acts 2 provides an image of abundant life among the early Christians, a life with an extravagance of worship, fellowship, prayer, generosity, service to others, and thankfulness.

How does the image of the Good Shepherd sit with you? How do you picture the relationship between you and Jesus—with shepherd and sheep imagery, or something else? Where and how do you recognize the Good Shepherd's voice? Do you know someone who has abundant life in Christ—a life of faith, joy, and love? What would such a life look like for you, and for your faith community?

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