

Liturgy

The Fourth Sunday of Easter
Year B

GATHERING

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The grave is empty!

Alleluia! He is risen indeed!

The Lamb is on the throne!

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;

come before Him with joyful singing.

Know that the LORD Himself is God.

It is He who made us and not we ourselves.

We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving,

and into His courts with praise;

Give thanks to Him and bless His name.

For the LORD is good:

His lovingkindness is everlasting;

and His faithfulness continues to all generations.

— Psalm 100

Come Let Us Worship and Bow Down

Come, let us worship and bow down,
Let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our Maker.
(Repeat)

For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand; yes, the sheep of His hand.

CCLI Song #27329 ©1980 Maranatha Praise, Inc. Dave Doherty, based on Psalm 95:6-7

I Call You Faithful

I call You Faithful, Your name is Faithful;
Lord, You are Faithful to me.

I call you Faithful, Your name is Faithful;
Faithful You are, and Faithful You'll be.

(Repeat)

I call You Holy; Your name is Holy;
Lord, You are Holy to me. . . .

I call You Jireh; Your name is Jireh;
You are Provider to me.

I call You Jireh; Your name is Jireh,
Provider You are, and Provider You'll be.

I call You Shepherd; Your name is Shepherd;
You're the Good Shepherd to me.

I call You Shepherd; Your name is Shepherd;
Shepherd You are, and Shepherd You'll be.

I call You all that; Your name is All That;
Lord, You are All That to me. . .

CCLI Song # 402030; ©1990 Dawn Treader Music | Shepherd's Fold Music;
Bobby Price and Kevin Walker; Donny McClurkin lyrics ("Good Shepherd" added).

*LECTIONARY for the fourth Sunday
of Easter, Year B*

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

The fourth Sunday of Eastertide traditionally focuses on Christ as both Shepherd and Lamb. In all three yearly cycles of the Revised Common Lectionary, this Sunday includes the 23rd Psalm and selected verses from John 10. As we continue our observance of the fifty-day season of Easter and our contemplation of the ongoing meaning and significance of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection for the redemption of all of God's creation, our worship this week centers on Christ as the Good Shepherd and on His tender care and leading of us, His sheep.

Though Psalm 100 is not included in this week's lectionary, it is a wonderful Gathering acclamation that reflects the joy of following the Great Shepherd, the risen Lamb of God. It is a familiar call to worship and an invitation to us to acknowledge the Lord as Creator, to enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise, joyfully declaring His faithfulness and goodness.

I Call You Faithful medleys well with the now-classic Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down, and echoes the last line of the Gathering psalm ("His faithfulness continues to all generations"). We've added a verse for this Sunday's theme—"I call You Shepherd." This song is wonderfully versatile and adaptable to many worship themes, and fitting in many places in an order of worship (pre-service call to worship, Gathering, Invocation, Sending). Every two verses, the music modulates up by a half step.

INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare.
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

Early let us seek Thy favor,
Early let us do Thy will;
Blessèd Lord and only Savior,
With Thy love our bosoms fill.
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!
Thou hast loved us, love us still.
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!
Thou hast loved us, love us still.

Words: attrib. to Dorothy A. Thrupp, 1836. Music: William B. Bradbury, 1859.
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PROFESSION OF FAITH

Jesus declared:

"I am the Good Shepherd;
The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
I am the good shepherd,
and I know My own,
and My own know Me,
even as the Father knows Me,
and I know the Father;
and I lay down My life for the sheep.
My sheep hear My voice,
and I know them, and they follow Me;
and I give eternal life to them,
and they will never perish;
and no one will snatch them out of My hand.
I and the Father are one."

– John 10:11, 14-15, 27-30

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quiet waters.

He restores my soul;

*He guides me in the paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.*

Even 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, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me

all the days of my life,

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

– Psalm 23

We've used verses 1 and 4 of this nineteenth-century hymn here; verses 2 and 3 are used a bit later, at Prayers of Confession.

The profession of faith weaves together Jesus' declaration that He is the Good Shepherd, and His promise of eternal life through His sacrifice, with a corporate, antiphonal reading of Psalm 23.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

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 to help?*

Little children, let us love,

not in word or speech, but with actions and in truth.

This is His commandment,

*that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ,
and love one another, just as He commanded us.*

And all who keep His commandments abide in Him,
and He abides in them.

– from 1 John 3:16-24

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us (verse 2)

We are Thine, Thou dost befriend us,

Be the guardian of our way;

Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us,

Seek us when we go astray.

Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!

Hear, O hear us when we pray.

Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!

Hear, O hear us when we pray.

[Silence]

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name;

And deliver us and forgive our sins, for Your name's sake.

**So we, Your people and the sheep of Your pasture,
will give thanks to You forever;
to all generations we will proclaim Your praise.**

– Psalm 79:9,13

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us (verse 3)

Thou hast promised to receive us,

Poor and sinful though we be;

Thou hast mercy to relieve us,

Grace to cleanse and power to free.

Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!

We will early turn to Thee.

Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus!

We will early turn to Thee.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The words of Jesus, great blessings of pardon:

“I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

*“They who have my commandments and keep them
are those who love me;*

*and those who love me will be loved by my Father,
and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”*

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,

just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.

I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you,

and that your joy may be complete.”

– John 14:19-21, 15:10-11

Thanks be to God!

The call to confession is written for two readers, but can be assigned to groups within the congregation.

The second and third verses of Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us are especially appropriate for use during prayers of confession.

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and testimonies of thanksgiving and praise

Gracious Lord and loving Shepherd, **through Your goodness and mercies | You have blessed us with all we have, and all we are. With gratitude, we joyfully give back to You what is Yours. As covenant people, the sheep of Your pasture, we lift our lives up to You in worship and praise.**

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

My Shepherd will supply my need:
Jehovah is His Name;
In pastures fresh He makes me feed,
Beside the living stream.
He brings my wand'ring spirit back
When I forsake His ways,
And leads me, for His mercy's sake,
In paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death
His presence is my stay;
One word of His supporting breath
Drives all my fears away.
His hand, in sight of all my foes,
Doth still my table spread;
My cup with blessings overflows,
His oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God
Attend me all my days;
O may Thy house be my abode,
And all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger, nor a guest,
But like a child at home.

No more a stranger, nor a guest,
But like a child at home.

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719. Hymn Tune: RESIGNATION (William Walker's *Southern Harmony*, 1835).
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THE WORD

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

There are many wonderful versifications and settings of the 23rd Psalm. This one, set in verse by Isaac Watts, especially echoes the closeness and faithfulness of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Other examples include hymns such as The King of Love My Shepherd Is; Stuart Townend's setting of Psalm 23 (CCLI Song #1585970 ©1996 Thankyou Music); and Twila Paris' You Have Been Good (CCLI Song #59452 ©1988 Aruise Music)

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again!

Our Father in Heaven (sung)

Our Father in heaven,
Your name is holy,
Your name is holy, our Father.
Your kingdom come,
And Your will be done
Here on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us, we pray, Our bread for today,
Our debts forgive, and in turn we will live,
Forgiving of what others owe.
Keep us from trials;
Save us from our ancient foe!

As we sing the kingdom,
We sing the power,
We sing the glory be Yours –
Forever. Amen. Amen. Amen!

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Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer.
There is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom,
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.
To this I hold: my hope is only Jesus.
For my life is wholly bound to His.
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark, but I am not forsaken,
For by my side the Saviour, He will stay.
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing,
For in my need, His power is
displayed.
To this I hold: my Shepherd will defend me,
Through the deepest valley He will lead.
Oh the night has been won,
And I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven,
The future sure, the price, it has been paid.
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon,
And He was raised to overthrow the grave.
To this I hold: my sin has been defeated.
Jesus now, and ever, is my plea.
Oh the chains are released,
I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

Music for this setting of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father in Heaven, is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet, and as a solo/melody line with piano accompaniment on request.

Here's the link:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/our-father-heaven>

With every breath I long to follow Jesus,
For He has said that He will bring me home.
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne.
To this I hold: my hope is only Jesus.
All the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete,
Still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

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SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

I Call You Faithful (reprise)

I call You Faithful, Your name is Faithful;
You are so Faithful to me.
I call you Faithful, Your name is Faithful;
Faithful You are, and Faithful You'll be. (repeat)

Benediction:

Almighty God,
whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
Grant that Your people, illumined by Your word and Table,
may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory.
Amen.

And as we go forth, walking out our baptisms, may the God of peace—
who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant—
equip us with everything good, that we may do His will,
working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

—based on Hebrews 13:20-21

Amen! Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

A thought about worship from the Ancient Fathers –

“Feed us, Your children, as sheep. Master, fill us With righteousness from Your own pasture. Instructor, give us food on Your holy mountain, the church, which towers in the air, is above the clouds, and touches heaven. "And I will be," He says, "their Shepherd," and will be as near to them as clothes to their skin. He wants to save my flesh by enveloping it in the robe of immortality, and He has anointed my body. "They shall call Me," He says, "and I will say, Here am I." You heard sooner than I expected, Master. "And if they pass over, they shall not slip," says the Lord. For we who are passing over to eternal life will not fall into corruption because He will sustain us. For so He has said and so He has willed. Our Instructor is righteously good. "I came not," He says, "to be ministered unto, but to minister." Therefore, He is introduced in the Gospel as "wearied," because He toiled for us and promised "to give His life as a ransom for many." For Christ alone is the Good Shepherd. He is generous and gives us the greatest of all gifts, His own life. He is extremely good and loving to men, while, when He might have been Lord, He wished to become a brother to humanity. He was so good that He died for us.”

— *Clement of Alexandria*

Lectionary for next week: Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 22:25-31
1 John 4:7-21
John 15:1-8

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As last week, today's benediction is a variation of the collect for the second Sunday after the Epiphany from the Book of Common Prayer. This week, we add the benediction from the epistle to the Hebrews, as we are sent for into the world with the promise that our great Shepherd continues to work in us and equip us to do His will.