



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso,
Indiana 46385 • (219) 462-6660
clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 21, 2024

We Welcome You to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front on you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

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

PRELUDE

The Good Shepherd

Gregg

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

EASTER ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the wellspring of grace,
our Easter and our joy.
Amen.

Look, here is water!
Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

Immersed in the promises of baptism,
let us give thanks for what God has done for us.
We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning
your voice thundered over the deep
and water became the essence of life.
Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.
The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day.
Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea
into freedom's land.
In a desert pool the Ethiopian official
entered your boundless baptismal life.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John
and anointed with the Holy Spirit.
By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,
freeing us to live as Easter people.
We rejoice with glad hearts,
giving all honor and praise to you,
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Amen.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

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.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.



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



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to



hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Lord of the sheepfold,
whose love is not for hire,
who calls to himself
the victims of the world:
we thank you that Christ
laid down his life for us
when we could not help ourselves;
in the weakness of his love
give us strength to work for peace
in the world he came to serve,
through Jesus Christ, the good shepherd.
Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children are invited for a time together.

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.

PSALM 23

The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and the people.

Refrain



Psalm Tone



¹The 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.**

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**

READING: 1 John 3:16-24

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.

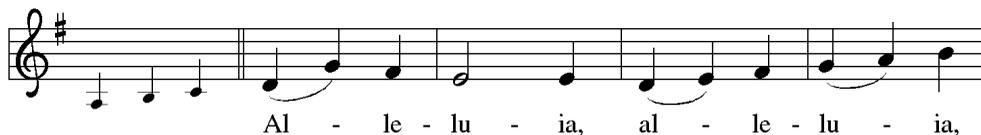
²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

The Word of the Lord.

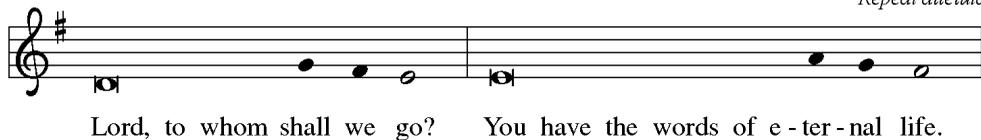
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



Repeat alleluia



HOLY 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.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[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.

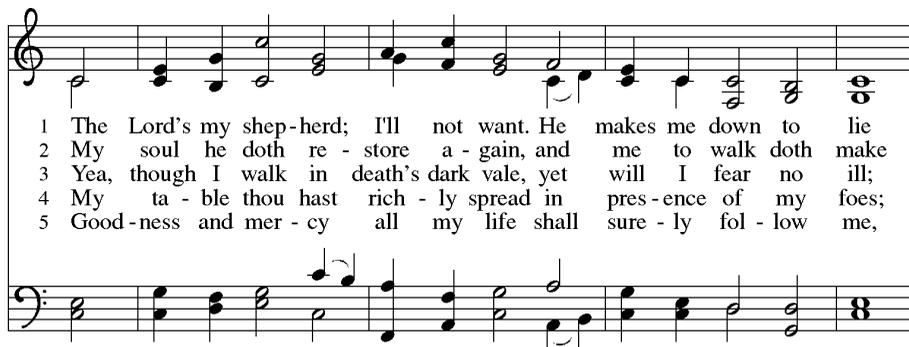
SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

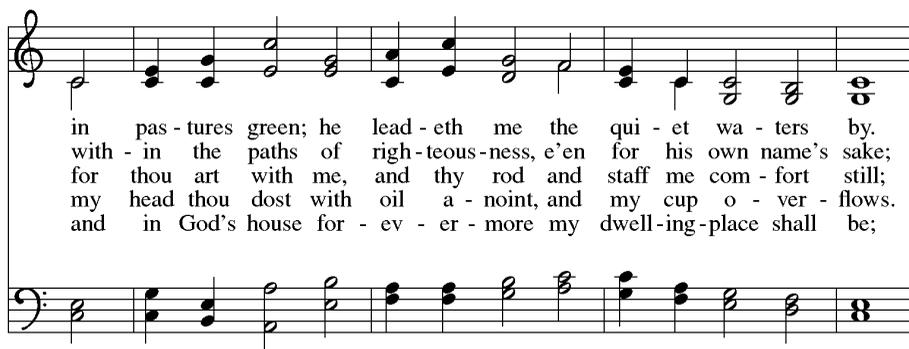


HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #778 *The Lord's My Shepherd*

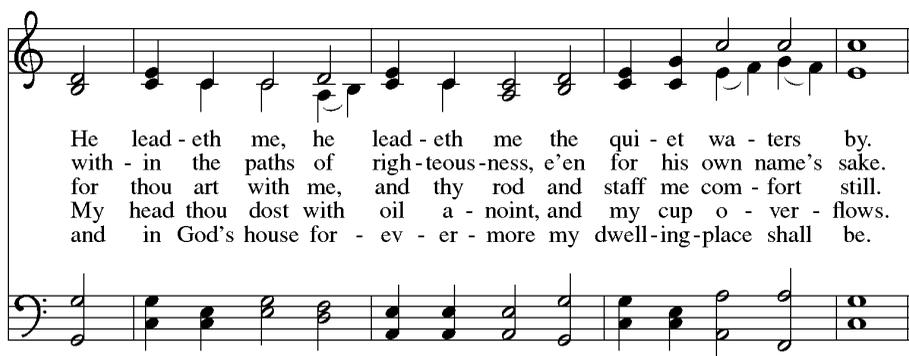
The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.



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 rich - ly spread 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: *The Psalms of David in Meeter*, Edinburgh, 1650
Music: BROTHER JAMES' AIR, James L. Macbeth Bain; arr. Gordon Jacob, 1895–1984
Arr. © Oxford University Press.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS

Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations—further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.

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. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, nurture the growth of healing, prosperity, and human rights. 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 Mark, Anselm of Canterbury, Toyohiko Kagawa, 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.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with NWI Community Action www.nwi-ca.com (5240 Fountain Drive, Crown Point) and Housing Opportunities www.hoi.help (2001 Calumet Ave., Valpo) – now one combined organization.



If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code or browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).

OFFERTORY (8:00 am):

Fugue in C major

Pachelbel

OFFERTORY ANTHEM (10:30 am):

Be Still

Marrolli

Be still and know that I am God: let peace embrace your heart. Be still and know that I am God; let fear and anguish now depart. Though the earthquakes rage, though the tempests roll, though the storms conspire to destroy, be still and know that I am God: the earth shall rise again in joy. Be still and know that I am God; let tranquil hope fill your mind. Be still and know that I am God; let grief and trouble be left behind. Though the shadows fall, though the darkness cries, though the night seems endless and dire. Be still and know that I am God: the morn shall rise in holy fire.

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

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 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.

The image shows a musical score for 'Great Thanksgiving' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: '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.' The melody is simple and hymn-like, using quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")

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

The image shows a musical score for 'Sanctus' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.' The melody is simple and hymn-like, using quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:

**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

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

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.
Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; wine is received either by Common Cup or from individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

LAMB OF 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.



COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #484 *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,

Refrain



so when you call your fam - 'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - joice.
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.

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997
Music: BICENTENNIAL, Robert E. Kreutz, 1922–1996
Text and music © 1977 Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

ACS #1062 *Build a Longer Table*



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,
2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;
3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.
4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,



feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.
where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.
Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.
Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.



Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,
For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,
When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,
So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.



Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.
Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.
Christ tears down our fenc - es; all are wel - come here.
None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

Text © 2018 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

When all have returned to their places, the assembly stands.

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

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Shepherding God,
you have prepared a table before us
and nourished us with your love.
Send us forth from this banquet
to proclaim your goodness
and share the abundant mercy of Jesus,
our redeemer and friend.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

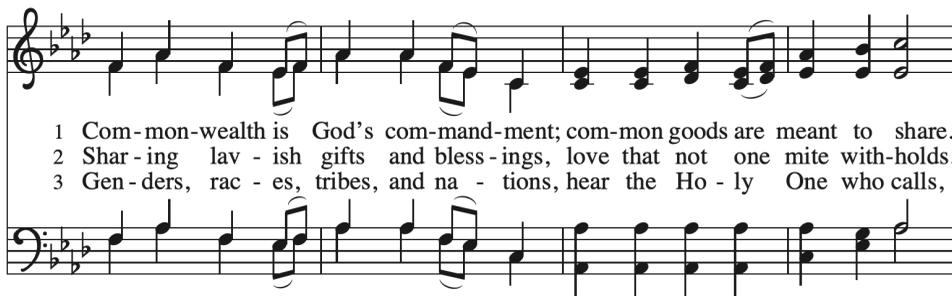
Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

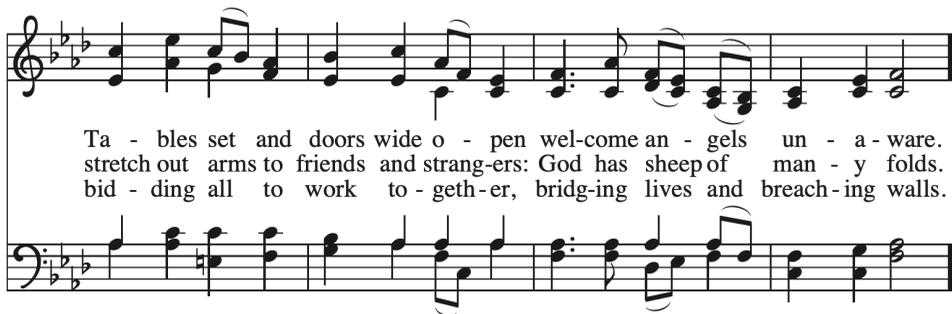
Amen.



SENDING HYMN ACS # 1036 *Commonwealth Is God's Commandment*

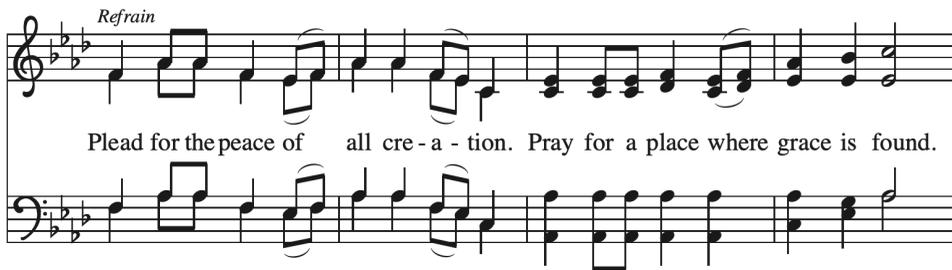


1 Com-mon-wealth is God's com-mand-ment; com-mon goods are meant to share.
2 Shar-ing lav-ish gifts and bless-ings, love that not one mite with-holds,
3 Gen-ders, rac-es, tribes, and na-tions, hear the Ho-ly One who calls,



Ta-bles set and doors wide o-pen wel-come an-gels un-a-ware.
stretch out arms to friends and stran-gers: God has sheep of man-y folds.
bid-ding all to work to-geth-er, bridg-ing lives and breach-ing walls.

Refrain



Plead for the peace of all cre-a-tion. Pray for a place where grace is found.



Shan-ti, pax, sha-lom, mas-la-ha: com-mon good is ho-ly ground.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
Music: RESTORATION, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835
Text © 2018 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Alleluia! Go in peace.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing

Kerr

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Olivia Hernandez	Portia Novak
Lector	Paige Reichardt	Doug Schmidt
Prayer Assistant	Lanie Steinwart	Sara Long
Communion Assistants	Erin Schmidgall Chris Schmidgall	Sara Long Cindy McGuire
Ushers	Don MacMillan	Jon, Christine, Maya & Jay Bull
Sound/Light	Zach Wehner	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Tony Reinhold
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Sanctuary Choir Lena Gibson, cantor Daniel Gibson-Even, accompanist	
Communion Baker	Bull Family	
Communion Table	Barb Clements Diana Ahlbrand	Terry Albrecht Marilyn McGawn Helen Arvidson Marla Niksch Lori Schwartz

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of April 21, 2024

April 21

Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, died 1109

This eleventh- and twelfth-century Benedictine monk stands out as one of the greatest theologians between Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. He is counted among the medieval mystics who emphasized the maternal aspects of God. Of Jesus Anselm says, “In sickness you nurse us and with pure milk you feed us.” Anselm is perhaps best known for his “satisfaction” theory of atonement. He argued that human rebellion against God demands a payment, but because humanity is fallen it is incapable of making that satisfaction. But God takes on human nature in Jesus Christ, Anselm proposed, in order to make the perfect payment for sin.

April 23

Toyohiko Kagawa, renewer of society, died 1960

Toyohiko Kagawa (toy-oh-hee-koh ka-ga-wah) was born in 1888 in Kobe, Japan. Orphaned early, he was disowned by his remaining extended family when he became a Christian. Kagawa wrote, spoke, and worked at length on ways to employ Christian principles in the ordering of society. His vocation to help the poor led him to live among them. He established schools, hospitals, and churches. He also worked for peace and established the Anti-War League. He was arrested for his efforts to reconcile Japan and China after the Japanese attack of 1940.

April 25

Mark, Evangelist

Though Mark himself was not an apostle, it is likely that he was a member of one of the early Christian communities. It is possible that he is the John Mark of Acts 12 whose mother owned the house where the apostles gathered. The gospel attributed to him is brief and direct. It is considered by many to be the earliest gospel. Tradition has it that Mark went to preach in Alexandria, Egypt, became the first bishop there, and was martyred.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia.**

We are **thankful** for:

- the long history of Christianity in these lands
- Christians and Muslims who have witnessed to their faith during long years of repression and persecution
- positive developments these countries have undergone since the end of the Soviet era
- those who pursue peace and reconciliation in the face of old suspicions and animosities

We **pray** for:

- greater respect for the human rights of all the peoples living in these countries
- just changes for those living in situations of poverty and discrimination
- the healing of past wrongs and distorted memories of what has occurred
- a prophetic witness of the churches in relation to new challenges
- the Georgian Orthodox Church, that it may rediscover a rich relationship with the family of churches worldwide

Stewardship Snippet

Psalm 23:1—The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

You've read and prayed this before, but the passage's power is only increased by repetition. Stewards believe in God's abundance and learn the difference between needs and wants. God fills our deepest needs.

Always Room for One More

When Jesus says “I am” in the Gospel of John, he unlocks a new perspective on his love. In today’s reading, when Jesus declares, “I am the good shepherd,” we can imagine our Lord caring for us and guiding us. We picture ourselves as his sheep. It’s reassuring to hear that we aren’t alone to navigate the dangers and challenges of this world. We have a loving shepherd who is looking out for us.

Jesus loves us so much that he goes above and beyond the shepherd’s role as a caretaker. He gives up his own life so our sins can be forgiven and we can receive eternal life. That’s what being a good shepherd means—having such a close relationship with the sheep that the shepherd will stop at nothing to protect them. The shepherd will lay down his own life so his sheep can have life.

When we hear Jesus’ promise to be our good shepherd, we must not miss his commitment to gather up the sheep that aren’t yet part of his flock. They, too, will listen to Jesus’ voice. Responding to his loving call, they will become part of the one flock that follows Jesus as their good shepherd, their Savior, and their Lord. No matter how many sheep are already jostling for space, there is always room for one more. Just like there is always room at our holy communion table for one more person to eat the bread, drink the wine, and receive the gifts of God’s mercy and grace. We can always squeeze closer to the sheep around us to let one or more sheep enter Jesus’ flock, thankful that the flock is growing and that we get to listen to the loving voice of our good shepherd, together.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2024 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26201.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Portions printed under OneLicense.net License #A-711129.

Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.