THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER April 30, 2023

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!

HHH

THE ENTRANCE RITE

PRELUDE

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
J. S. Bach

WELCOME

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

ENTRANCE HYMN #692

Praise to You and Adoration

- Praise to You and adoration, Blessèd Jesus, Son of God, Who, to serve Your own creation, Came to share our flesh and blood. Guide me that I never may From Your fold or pastures stray, But with zeal and joy exceeding Follow where Your steps are leading.
- 2 Hold me ever in Your keeping; Comfort me in pain and strife. In my laughter and my weeping Be with me throughout my life. Give me greater love for You, And my faith and hope renew In Your birth, Your life, and passion, In Your death and resurrection.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

LSB 151

In the name of the Father and of the \maltese Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the A Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

KYRIE p. 152

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P: The Lord be with you.
- C: And also with you.
- P: Let us pray. Almighty God,
- C: merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A + A

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(10:30) ANTHEM

Jubilation Choir

Psalm 23: The Lord Is My Shepherd Setting: Paul Bouman

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

He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake. 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. You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; You have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

SECOND LESSON 1 Peter 2:19-25

This is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(10:30) CHILDREN'S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

LSB 156

Alleluia.
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL John 10:1-10

The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 10th chapter Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the sheepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON (Be seated)

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. In each year of the church's three-year cycle of readings, on this Fourth Sunday of Easter, we read from John chapter ten where Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. This year's reading, from the first verses of the chapter, doesn't yet include that exact designation. Jesus briefly speaks here about a shepherd of the sheep without specifically saying that it is him. He then goes on to describe himself with a different metaphor, saying he is the door to the sheep pen. But eventually Jesus circles back and reveals himself as the Good Shepherd. And this metaphor gets developed to a much greater extent in the chapter than the other, which is why this day in the church year is designated as it is.

With that explained, I'd like us to turn our attention now to today's second reading, from the book of First Peter. We've been reading through this book during the Easter season and have finished the first chapter. You would think that our reading today would pick up with the beginning of chapter two. But instead, the church has us read the last part of the chapter. There's a reason for this of course. Today's verses include "shepherd language." Peter calls Jesus "the Shepherd and Overseer of your soul." Here we have an excellent connection to today's theme. And next week we will circle back to those earlier verses of the chapter.

About those words from Peter which call Jesus a shepherd, I'll say a few things later in the sermon. But first, let's note what this text is calling us to do. Peter, early in today's verses, very specifically uses the phrase: "for to this you have been called." Words such as these should catch our attention and move us to explore.

What is the specific calling to which Peter is referring? The verse before this tells us clearly. It says: "for this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly." Our calling is to endure sorrows while suffering unjustly. And to make sure we understand this, Peter repeats the call, saying: "if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God."

Notice that Peter makes an important distinction. He differentiates between our unjust suffering and that suffering which is caused by our own sin. And this distinction is important because it affects how God views us. If we sin and suffer for it, God is only so

sympathetic. But when we suffer through no fault of our own, God will take notice and act with grace.

Let's be clear here that the call in these verses is not simply to suffer. We don't need to seek out suffering as if it's some kind of good. Because it's not. Suffering comes when something is wrong. The call that we have here is to endure suffering, with faith, when that suffering comes.

Suffering will come. We know this. We live in a fallen world where death is our curse. The road to our death is filled with many pains – both physical and emotional.

Some of the suffering we experience comes as a result of people sinning against us. But other suffering comes simply through living in this world. It comes through aging and through the dangers of the natural world. And it comes through the work involved in providing for our daily bread – which takes, as we say, blood, sweat and tears.

Some suffering can be successfully avoided – or at least put off for a while. But eventually all of us will suffer. Next Sunday we will confirm a group of our young members in their faith. In the blessing I will give to each of them is a line which asks that God give them "patience in suffering." It always pains me to say that line. But I know it's a necessary prayer.

Some of the hardest suffering to endure is that which comes unjustly by the hands of others. And when we examine earlier verses from Peter's letter, we see examples of the kind of unjust suffering his hearers were enduring.

The verse right before today's section says: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust." Some of these first hearers apparently worked as servants. And servants, as we know, often face injustice; sometimes even abuse.

These words of Peter remind us that in our world today this same kind of injustice still takes place. We don't normally label people servants anymore. But service work still happens. And many workers in service professions are taken advantage of. Many are underpaid. Others are asked to do horrible things. Injustice in the workplace is a problem today just as it was in Peter's.

Here we should point out that Peter's advice in these verses isn't just to servants either. That may be the immediate application. But just a few verses earlier Peter referred to all Christians as servants. He said: "Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as

a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God." All God's people should serve. And all will need to endure some suffering in their serving – including that which comes from unjust acts.

Looking back a few more verses we see another cause of suffering. Here Peter says: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good."

Here we are reminded that being subject to the government can also be an occasion for suffering. That was especially the case in Peter's day, when many governments outlawed the Christian religion or unjustly persecuted it.

We in America enjoy wonderful rights and freedoms. It's hard to believe that our government might be causing us to suffer. I don't know if I see any of this. But perhaps there's a policy or action that you feel leads to it. And certainly there's suffering which comes from other governments. I think about those who have initiated war or imprisoned people unjustly.

We Christians need to remember Peter's command to be subject to the government. "Honor the Emperor," he adds a few verses later. And by the way, Paul gives that same command too.

This doesn't mean that we can't complain or even protest against the government. Where there is unjust suffering, it should be pointed out and worked against.

Still, we must also hear God's call to endure. We are to endure suffering, says the Lord. And we do this knowing that God is there to help us. He will help us with our endurance. And he will bless us in our sufferings as well – as he has promised.

As Peter speaks to his hearers about this difficult subject, notice that he then points to the example of Jesus. He says that sufferers can endure "because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."

Peter then elaborates on the example of Christ's suffering. And he does this in a unique way. He doesn't tell of Jesus' suffering in a narrative form – relating the details of his crucifixion at the hands of the authorities, much as he did in his first speeches in the book of Acts, including the one we read last Sunday. Here Peter chooses a different approach. Here he uses the language of Isaiah 53 – known to us as the great "suffering servant" chapter of the Old Testament.

We read this chapter just a few weeks ago, on Good Friday. Perhaps it's still fresh in your mind. Isaiah 53 always moves our hearts because it predicts and describes Jesus' suffering and death so incredibly well. That's no doubt why it is quoted in the New Testament seven times.

Here, Peter includes a few direct quotations from the chapter. But mostly he just employs its language. For three verses – verses 22 to 24 – Peter uses that language to describe Jesus' suffering. And two of the things he highlights specifically is that this suffering was endured by Jesus silently and that the suffering had a purpose.

The fact of Jesus' silent suffering serves as an example of the endurance in unjust suffering which Peter has implored. Isaiah describes it by saying: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." Peter relates this by saying: "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

Peter wants us to see that in Jesus, we have a strong example of how to fulfill our calling to endure. Jesus endured his suffering and was redeemed – and we, too, will be redeemed by God when we endure in our suffering.

As Peter goes on with his quoting of Isaiah, we see, as well, that Jesus is more than just an example. Jesus' suffering also has a greater purpose. It does something much more important for us as well.

Peter says it like this: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness." Here we have a powerful statement of conclusion, one possibly circulated very early among the church, for it is put forth also by Paul in Romans chapter six. And while the language of this sentence is only partially from Isaiah, the thought is straight from chapter 53. There we read: "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace."

And if there's any doubt that Peter wants us to see Jesus here as more than just an example but also as one who has died for the salvation of our souls, it's erased as Peter concludes with a direct quote from Isaiah to finish the verse. "And by his wounds you have been healed." Beautiful!

On the tree of the cross, Jesus paid for our sins. By his wounds we have full and complete healing. Jesus did what we could never do on our own. Jesus fulfilled his calling when we could not fulfill ours.

We still have our calling. There is still suffering for us to endure. Thankfully, Jesus continues to care for us – enabling our endurance and helping us as we have need.

Peter alludes to this ongoing care of the Lord by reminding us that Jesus is the "Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." This means that he is our protector and our guide. He is our teacher. He is our friend. He is our good and just master. He is the one who governs our lives in all the best ways.

Jesus will shepherd us for as many days as God gives. And then he will bring us to our heavenly home. In the last chapter of his letter, Peter says: "when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." The reference to the crown of glory indicates that our heavenly home will be one of great joy – far eclipsing the suffering we are enduring now.

Notice too that Jesus is called the "Chief Shepherd." This means that under him serve many other shepherds – some of whom are pastors – and all of whom are believers who embrace the suffering their service brings, endure it in faith, and give of themselves for the sake of others.

God has called us to endure our suffering in faith. And God has promised to help us through our suffering — chiefly through the work of his Son Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

May God then bless each of us in this calling. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY #709 (Stand)

- The King of love my shepherd is,
 Whose goodness faileth never;
 I nothing lack if I am His
 And He is mine forever.
- 2 Where streams of living water flow, My ransomed soul He leadeth And, where the verdant pastures grow, With food celestial feedeth.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

- 3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me And on His shoulder gently laid And home rejoicing brought me.
- 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
 With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,
 Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
 Thy cross before to guide me.

- 5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight; Thine unction grace bestoweth; And, oh, what transport of delight From Thy pure chalice floweth!
- 6 And so through all the length of days
 Thy goodness faileth never;
 Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
 Within Thy house forever!

APOSTLES' CREED

Hymnal, back cover

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life
→ everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. **Fellowship Cards** help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For steadfast faith to hear the voice of our great Shepherd, that passing through the valley of the shadow of death we may receive our portion in His abundant life, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For the work of the Holy Spirit by the Means of Grace, that daily the number of believers who are being saved may increase and God's people may proclaim His truth with all boldness, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For artists, musicians and writers, that our gracious heavenly Father would inspire them in their creativity to glorify the Good Shepherd's truth; and that He would direct our hearts and minds to that which is beautiful, noble and pleasing in His sight, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who govern the people of the Church, that they would serve with integrity, and honor the purposes of the Good Shepherd as they protect His people and serve the causes of justice and liberty, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who suffer in body or mind, for the unemployed, for the grieving, and for all on our prayer list, including Geraine, Ann, Sophia, Dolly, Gloria, Norma, Brooks, Trudy, Mary Ann, June, Peter, Wendy, Ron, James, Trey, Russell, Tawni and Rich, and for all those we name in our hearts at this time... that the wounds of our Shepherd would give them healing and His voice give certainty in every sorrow, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For unity in the one true faith as God's people devote themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all baptized Christians, that we whose sins have been crucified in Christ's body on the tree would bring forth the fruit of holy lives by His continual grace; and for our Catechumens, that they would be blessed and led as they make their final preparations to be confirmed, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Hear us, heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

#955

1 Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
And fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
That we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and the dreams of all;
Unite them with the prayers we offer now.
Grace our table with Your presence, and give us
A foretaste of the feast to come.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE LSB 160

The Lord be with you.

And also 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 Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS LSB 161

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

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.

PAX DOMINI LSB 163

The peace of the Lord be with you always. Amen.

AGNUS DEI LSB 163

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

THE COMMUNION (Be seated)

The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the receptacles.

Refrain

You satisfy the hungry heart
With gift of finest wheat.
Come give to us, O saving Lord,
The bread of life to eat.

- As when the shepherd calls his sheep,
 They know and heed his voice;
 So when You call Your fam'ly, Lord,
 We follow and rejoice. Refrain
- With joyful lips we sing to You Our praise and gratitude That You should count us worthy, Lord, To share this heav'nly food. Refrain
- 3 Is not the cup we bless and share The blood of Christ outpoured? Do not one cup, one loaf, declare Our oneness in the Lord? Refrain
- The myst'ry of Your presence, Lord,
 No mortal tongue can tell:
 Whom all the world cannot contain
 Comes in our hearts to dwell. Refrain
- You give Yourself to us, O Lord;
 Then selfless let us be,
 To serve each other in Your name
 In truth and charity. Refrain

PRAYER (Stand)

BENEDICTION

1 Thine is the glory,
Risen, conqu'ring Son;
Endless is the vict'ry
Thou o'er death hast won!
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes
Where thy body lay.

Refrain

Thine is the glory,
Risen, conqu'ring Son;
Endless is the vict'ry
Thou o'er death hast won!

- 2 Lo, Jesus meets thee,
 Risen from the tomb!
 Lovingly he greets thee,
 Scatters fear and gloom;
 Let his Church with gladness,
 Hymns of triumph sing,
 For the Lord now liveth;
 Death hath lost its sting! Refrain
- 3 No more we doubt thee,
 Glorious Prince of life;
 Life is nought without thee;
 Aid us in our strife;
 Make us more than conqu'rors,
 Through thy deathless love;
 Bring us safe through Jordan
 To thy home above. Refrain

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Trumpet Voluntary
Gordon Young

Those serving:

Sunday, April 30, 8:00 a.m.:

Greeter:

Comm. Assistant: Dede Dixon

Reader: Dede Dixon

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Lynn Jacquez

Comm. Assistant: Dan Buuck

Reader: Lynn Jacquez

AV Assistants: Hannes Buuck Andreas Buuck

Acknowledgments

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