

4 Easter Sunday C, May 1, 2022
St. Mary's-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church
1010 12th Street, P.O. Box 491
Ramona, CA 92065

Liturgy begins on page 355, Book of Common Prayer

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

The Celebrant may say
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid;
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To God be the Glory
Tune: The Ashgrove, from Malcolm Archer's English Folk Song Mass
Sung by St. James Press Choir

To God be the glory, all glory in the highest
and peace to his people who dwell here below,
Our heav'nly Father, our Lord, and our sov'reign,
to you, the Almighty, our praises bestow.
We worship and adore you,
we bow here before you
with grateful thanksgiving,
our song let us raise.
All glory and honour and glad adoration
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

Lord Jesus, the only begotten of the Father
we praise and we bless you, the Son and the Lamb.
The sin of the world you have taken upon you,
have mercy upon us, the Great I AM.
For holy, you meet us,
yet lowly you greet us,
the Lord in the highest,
the Holy One.
All glory to the Father, the Son and the Spirit,
From ages everlasting, the Three in One.

The Celebrant then says
The Lord be with you.

People And also with you. Celebrant Let us pray.

Collect

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Acts 9:36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Psalm 23

Dominus regit me

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; *
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul *
and guides me along right pathways for his 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.
- 5 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.

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

Revelation 7:9-17

I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever!
Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.
They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

John 10:22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my

sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Sermon:

4 Easter C May 8, 2022
Acts 9:36-43 Ps.23
Rev 7:9-17 John 10:22-30

On Mother's Day, I should be quoting Jesus as saying, "My mother Mary and I were one during the nine months of gestation." And that would be literally true. Instead, from the Gospel, we have the words of Jesus saying, "The Father and I are one."

Okay, so much for lining up Scriptures with our favorite Hallmark holiday.

Well, this is also Good Shepherd Sunday, and a Shepherd is one who uses power and ability to take care of the vulnerable sheep, and who does that better than good mothers, and aren't we thankful for that today. Like a shepherd, a mother does so much that is unseen, seemingly invisible but the effects of good shepherding and good mothering are significant and telling for the benefit of our world.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the Lord God as Shepherd of the Psalmist, perhaps David the shepherd, are themes of Good Shepherd Sunday. Every metaphor has a limit before losing its signifying effectiveness. The Lord is My Shepherd, nothing shall I lack, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

There is something wonderful feeling as though we are favorite pets of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Have you ever said about a pet lover, "Wow, when I die, I want to return as your pet dog?" People who love their pets really treat them well, making them feel very specially loved.

But what is the limit of the shepherd-sheep metaphor? When I lived in Iowa as a boy, my school friends were farmers, and each were given a sow to feed, and that pig became their pet and friend. But when they took their well-fed sow to the State Fair, they auctioned their pet friend to the highest bidder and got good money for bacon and other pork treats. Same with sheep; they are a commodity needed for their wool and their meat. They may be pets but with a shelf life on their pethood status.

It is nice to be God's favorite lambs, but being such, we know that we are vulnerable to what eventually happens to all lambs, yes, death. As human lambs, we know that the conditions of aging, growth, and freedom exposes us to have a physical shelf life.

And that may help us to understand the contradictory metaphors about Jesus. Jesus is both shepherd and the lamb who was slain. Jesus had these two roles in identity with us to give us hope in being both lambs and shepherds. As lambs we know that we are often vulnerable, and often needing help from others, and we may often need to be sacrificial lamb for the quality and betterment of the lives of other. But we are also empowered shepherd who are given gifts to benefit the lives of others especially the lives of those who are in need. And both roles are fitting metaphors for the lives of good mothers, who live in sacrificial anonymity for the benefit of others, but as shepherds they get the sense of pleasure or completeness in the success of their children.

One of the most important phrases in today Gospel is this, Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them."

In the entire Gospel of John, what does "hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd mean?" It really means having the interpretive wisdom to perceive that the presentation of matters of the physical senses are used to impart spiritual meaning. Hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, walking, drinking, and living, does not refer to physical life but to perceptive aspects of spiritual life.

Being able to hear Jesus means that one learns the non-literal life of spiritual awakening in mystical experience of God's Holy Spirit.

As Lazarus was a symbol of having resurrection life even while one still lived in John's Gospel, that Lazarus tradition is shown to be continued with the coming to life again of Dorcas through the intercession of the apostle Peter. The experience of resurrection life even while we know that we're going to physically die was a chief metaphor of Paul, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.

Today on Good Shepherd Sunday, let the Gospel for us be learning how to live the conditions of being both lambs and shepherds. We are vulnerable to the probability conditions of true freedom, and sometimes like Mom, we have to take it for the team. The strength to live sacrificially is what also makes us shepherds, shepherds of care for those who need us to be there for them.

And if everything I'm saying sound silly, it is silly to the literal mind which cannot hear from having had an inward conversion to see the spiritual within the seeming visible and physical world.

May we be converted from crass literalism to be able to see the wonderful world of wisdom metaphors which enrich us with poetry of spirituality, and may we have the wisdom to know when to be literal and scientific and when and how to be poetic and spiritual. We can do both without confusing the two. In this way, let us hear with our spiritual ears the voice of the Risen Christ. Amen.

The 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: by the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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 of the People

The Peace of the Lord be always with you. People: And also with you.

Hymn: # 645, v. 1,2, 5, 6 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
Played and sung by Joshua Charney, Ph.D

1 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.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thy 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.

Doxology: Sung by Rob and Deb Lewallen

The Lord be with you. People And also with you.

Holy Eucharist, Prayer A, p. 361, BCP

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sung and Played by Rob and Deborah Lewallen

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power, of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power, of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Celebrant: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus

Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Sung and played by Rob and Deborah Lewallen

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

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Sung and played by Rob and Deb Lewallen

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 all that is evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. Amen. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn: Amazing Grace
Played by Stanley V. Smith, Jr. on the Hammer Dulcimer

Post Communion Prayer (BCP, page 365)
Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son

our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction:

Dismissal:

Lay Eucharistic Minister: Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. People: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Closing Hymn: Be Unto Your Name
Played and sung by Rob and Deborah Lewallen

We are a moment, You are forever
Lord of the Ages, God before time
We are a vapor, You are eternal
Love everlasting, reigning on high
Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
Highest praises, honor and glory
Be unto Your name, be unto Your name

We are the broken, You are the healer
Jesus, Redeemer, Mighty to save
You are the love song we'll sing forever
Bowing before You, blessing Your name
Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
Highest praises, honor and glory
Be unto Your name, be unto Your name
Be unto Your name

Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty
Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
Highest praises, honor and glory
Be unto Your name, be unto Your name

Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty
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