

May 3 2020 John 10:1-10 Lect A

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

Good morning – welcome to worship today on the Fourth Sunday of the Easter!

We need to quiet our minds enough so that we can hear that voice when the shepherd calls. I hope you are all well. If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. This Liturgy is from Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book and the prayers this morning are from Sundays & Seasons. **You will need one item with wool in it today before this time together. Mittens, a pair of socks, a hat, a piece of material or actual skein of wool.** Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths

We gather together

The Lord be with you - **and also with you**

Let us pray:

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

Amen.

The Word

Acts 2:42-47 Psalm 23 1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10

Homily based on John 10:

During my internship in seminary, I was invited to come and see lambs - actually triplets at a parishioner's farm. My intern site was in Grey Bruce County half hour south of Owen Sound. I would love to see the lambs, thinking I could pick one up and cuddle it like one does a kitten. I was mistaken! As I walked into the sheep pen, they kind of scurried away although I was as quiet as I could be, and their

shepherdess was right there. Then when I said something they really scattered! You see, for them, I was a total stranger and even though their caregiver was right there – the transfer of trust wasn't automatic. She told me not to think twice about it . . . that sheep are like that . . . they are skeetish! The response of the sheep depends on whose voice the sheep were listening to.

Our response depends on what we are plugged into listening to these days. *Whose voice do we listen to?* We have been taught to hear our parents, families, and perhaps our closest, trusted friends. These days there are some political leaders who serve only themselves and are not protecting their “sheep”- followers. We are relying heavily on the voices of our medical experts and I believe that their voices should be heeded.

After 6 weeks of social distancing, people today are becoming restless, anxious, frustrated and worried. Some days are tougher than others to raise our spirits above the daily news. We are frightened of the world around us – “the virus”, other people, our work or lack of work, the demands and expectations placed on us. We fear for our lives and the lives of our loved ones. We fear for our health.

The Psalm of David, is always our appointed psalm for the fourth Sunday of Easter, often known as Good Shepherd Sunday, speaks to the issue of fear. David goes on to write, that even though he walks through the darkest valley, he is not afraid because he has a sense of God's presence. He says “for thou art with me.” He conquered his fear because he realized that he was not alone. God is with him. As with David, we too can conquer our fears when we realize we are not alone.

Touch the piece of wool material in your hands. It reminds us that sheep sacrifice their wool so that we can create things like clothing and blankets to keep us warm. Christ sacrificed his life for us. Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly!” Abundant life; this is Jesus promise for us. To have abundant life means to know we are not alone; to know the voice of the good shepherd and to trust in him; to know the difference between false hope and the real hope that abundant life can only give. To know this is to have faith.

As we recall this image of the Good Shepherd and the sheep, we are called to simplicity, and solidarity with everyone around us. In 2020 this is needed in a time when many have lost their way. AMEN

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Shepherding God, we thank you for the educational ministries of your church. Enrich the work of teachers, professors, mentors, advisors, and faculty at universities, colleges, seminaries, and learning sites Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Creating God, we praise you for those who maintain and operate farm equipment, for those who plant and harvest crops, for local farmers' markets, and for those involved in agriculture of any kind. Strengthen their hands as they feed the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hears our prayer.**

Guiding God, no one should be in want. Bid the nations to return to your paths of righteousness and inspire our leaders to walk in your ways, so that all may have the opportunity to live abundantly and sustainably. Lord, in your mercy, **hears our prayer.**

Comforting God, you carry us tenderly. We pray for those who walk through dark valleys overshadowed by anxiety and overwhelmed with suffering *especially* Lord, in your mercy, **hears our prayer.**

Nurturing God, you desire justice for the hungry. Bless advocacy work, food pantries, and feeding ministries in our congregations. May none of our neighbors lack for basic needs. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Everlasting God, your beloved have heard your voice; you have called them by name and guided them to your side in death. We thank you for their lives of faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The God of all grace † bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!