



"Sun" by Edvard Munch, 1863-1944.

Christ Church UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Dan Stark, Minister and Erin Schoemann, Musician

www.uccmke.org

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! On this fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday), we, like the disciples after Jesus' resurrection, might find ourselves feeling a bit lost like sheep without a shepherd. We might struggle to understand the meaning of abundance when it seems like we have all lost so much during the pandemic. This week's Old Testament reading from Psalm 23 reminds us that God, the Good Shepherd, abides with us even in the darkest places in our lives and provides for us when we feel completely tapped out. Our Gospel lesson from John tells us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who has come that we might have life and live it abundantly. Today we are encouraged to remember that God offers us abundant life even amid times of strife.

"The Good Shepherd" Tanner, Henry Ossawa, 1859-1937.

Words of Welcome

Opening Litany (Repeat)

This is the day,
That the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice,
And be glad in it.
Amen!

A Song for Today

Opening Prayer

One: Jesus, you are our shepherd.
We shall never want.

You make us lie down in green pastures;
you lead us beside the still waters.
You restore our souls.

You guide us in the paths of righteousness for
your name's sake.
Even though we may walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
we fear no evil, for you, Christ, comfort us.

Jesus has prepared a table for us
in the presence of our foes;
Jesus has anointed us with the oil of salvation;
our cup runs over!

Surely, goodness and mercy will follow us
all the days of our lives,
And we will dwell in the house
of our Holy Savior forever and ever. Amen.

A Time for the Child in Us



Old Testament

[Psalm 23](#)

The book of Psalms contains the prayers, hymns, and meditations of Israel. Psalm 23 is an ancient song of comfort and thanksgiving. It depicts God, the Lord, as a faithful shepherd and protector of God's sheep. The psalm is often attributed to King David. The psalmist sings about how God will guide them – even in the valley of the shadow of death – protecting, leading, and walking with them in the darkest place imaginable. The psalm ends with the confident statement that God's blessings and mercy are always with us.

Beatitudes for Today

Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchel

Blessed are the maskwearers,
who help prevent passing on of illness.

Blessed are the maskmakers,
who are blessing us with their craft.

Blessed are the ones on the front lines,
who are doing their part to slow the spread, care for the sick, and provide emergency support.

Blessed are the grocery laborers, the sanitation workers, the hospital janitors –
essential workers who make our lives possible.

Blessed are all who stay home.

Blessed are the stressed out, the tired, the anxious, the lonely –
for we are alone together.

Blessed are you when you lose it –
because you are human.

You are loved, and God will see us through.

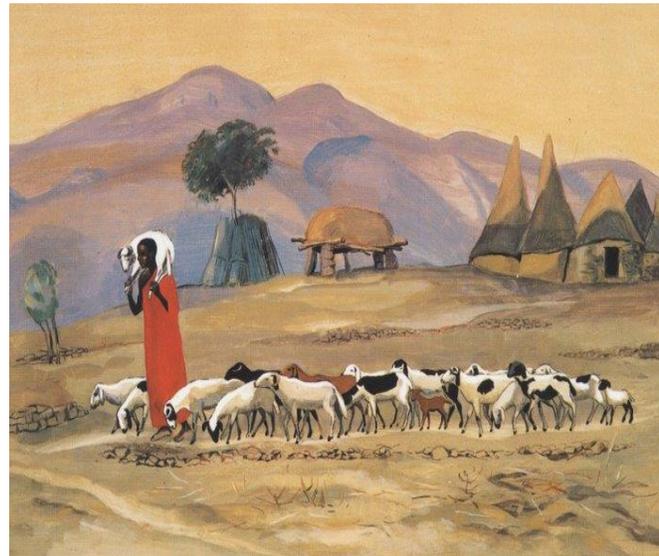
The Gospel

John's Gospel identifies Christ as the Messiah, sent by God, to deliver the people of Israel. In Jesus' teaching and preaching in John, he identifies himself as the bread of life, the light of the world, and the good shepherd. John 10 speaks of Jesus being the gate for the sheep. A thief enters the sheepfold by stealth, but the shepherd enters by the gate. The sheep do not listen to the thief, and those who claimed to be the Messiah before Jesus were "thieves and bandits." Jesus states that only those who enter by the gate will be saved. He came that the world might have abundant life.

Prayer of Confession

All: God of Healing and Compassion, we are quick to judge, quick to point blame, quick to want our kind of justice. Remind us that we need healing, and others need healing, too. Fill us with compassion. Help us to love one another as You have loved us, forgiving one another as You have forgiven us.

[John 10:1-10](#)



"The Good Shepherd" Mafa, Jesus. 1973, Cameroon.

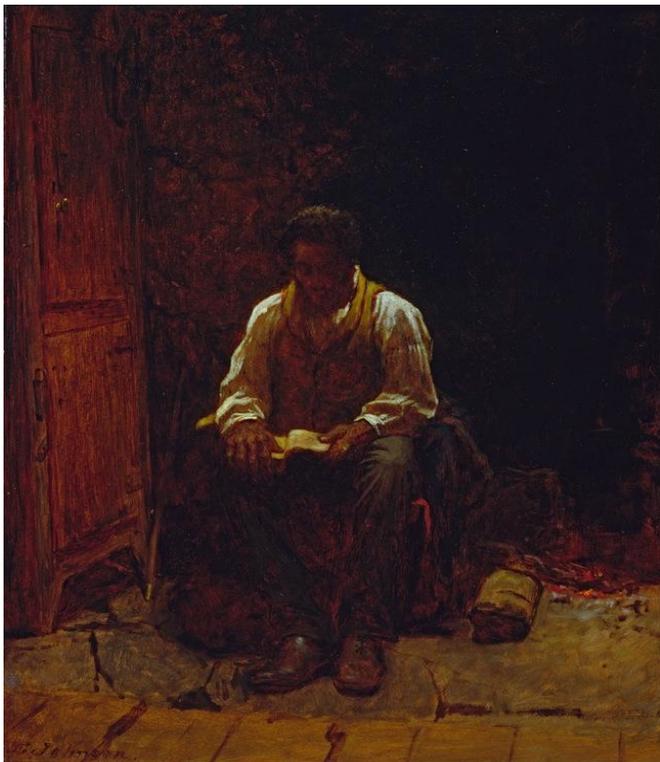
Words of Assurance

One: God loves you madly. God knows you have gone astray and have made mistakes and God loves you exactly the way you are. God is calling you back to the path. Listen for your name. Listen for God's call. Listen, learn, and love, for God has loved you into being, and God will love you into abundant life. Amen.

Homily

Risen: Abundant Life in Abundant Strife

Rev. Dan Stark



A Song of Response A Prayer for the Day Prayers of the People The Lord's Prayer Passing the Peace

Although we cannot be physically close to one another at this time, we can be relationally close. This Sunday morning, you are invited to pass the peace with your church family and loved ones by taking a moment to text, write, call, or message the people in your church family to let them know you are thinking of them. May the peace of Christ be with you.

"The Lord is My Shepherd" Johnson, Eastman, 1824-1906.

A Song for Sending

Closing Litany (Repeat)

This is the day,
That the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice,
And be glad in it.
Amen!

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If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email pastor@uccmke.org.
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You can make your offering to Christ Church through [PayPal](#) or by mailing a check to Christ Church,
915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

