

***Risen Christ Lutheran Church
Arvada, Colorado***

Family Devotion in Absence

Third Sunday of Easter - April 26, 2020

OPENING HYMN *TLH 263 "O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe"*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

INTROIT *Psalm 33:1, 5b, 6a, 18-20*

The earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. Alleluia.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made. Alleluia.

Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him,

on those who hope in his steadfast love,

that he may deliver their soul from death

and keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waits for the LORD;

he is our help and our shield.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

OLD TESTAMENT *Ezekiel 34:11-16*

¹¹“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹²As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up

the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. (ESV)

GRADUAL *Adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

Christ has risen from the dead.

God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,
He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
he has put all things under his feet.

EPISTLE *1 Peter 2:21-25*

²¹ 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. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (ESV)

HOLY GOSPEL *John 10:11-16*

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (ESV)

SERMON HYMN *LSB 709 "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"*

SERMON

The readings for today remind me of a story about a pastor who did children's sermons during the divine service. It was at a country church where the children knew about livestock, so he thought he was safe when he asked them, "What does a shepherd do with his sheep?" A little boy who was excited to know the answer exclaimed, "He kills them and eats them!" That's just one more reason to *not* do children's sermons in the divine service.

According to the Old Testament reading for today, however, the little boy's answer is partly correct when the Lord says, "the fat and the strong I will destroy." But there is a long list of other things a shepherd does. He searches for and looks after the sheep. He rescues them, gathers them out of dangerous places, and brings them to good pasture. The shepherd tends and feeds the sheep; he searches for the lost and brings back the strays; he heals the injured and strengthens the weak. In other words, a shepherd goes to great lengths take care for his sheep.

This is the imagery that Jesus uses in the Gospel reading where he calls himself the "good shepherd." As the good shepherd, he personally knows his sheep and they know him in a similar way that the Father knows Christ and he knows the Father. Furthermore, as the good shepherd, Jesus loves his sheep more than himself and lays down his life for the sheep. We Christians are his sheep. Christ Jesus laid down his life for us; he died on the cross to pay for all of our sins.

Unlike the hired hand who cares nothing for the sheep and runs away when he sees the wolf coming, Christ fought the predator, Satan, and beat him in order to protect us from destruction. Christ overcame the devil by laying down his life for us in death so that by the power of his resurrection from the dead he would give us eternal life. Now, sin, death, and the devil cannot destroy us who are in Christ by faith, hope, and love.

In the Epistle reading, St. Peter further explains about the death and resurrection of Christ for our forgiveness and new life in him. He says, “you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” This new life in Christ is one in which we are viewed as his own repentant sheep who have been brought back to Christ. And Peter refers to Jesus as the “shepherd and overseer;” or in ecclesial terms Christ is our pastor and bishop. He is not a pastor and bishop who governs us, like a civil leader or even a corporate CEO. Rather, he is our one true pastor and bishop who serves us, protects us, tends us, heals us, feeds us, and strengthens us. He does this for us by calling and ordaining under-pastors and under-bishops to preach and teach his Word to us and administer his Baptism, his Absolution, and his Body and Blood for our forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, and communion with God the Father, in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN TLH 426 “The Lord My Shepherd Is”

COLLECT FOR THE WORD

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look upon us with favor and give us peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *TLH 436 “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want”*

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY: Isaiah 40:25-31; 1 Peter 2:11-20;
John 16:16-22.

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