

April 25, 2021
Fourth Sunday of Easter

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "The Lord is my Shepherd" in a setting of G.F. Handel's "Largo" from XERXES

Lighting the Christ Candle

Moment of Silent Reflection

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...

Call to Worship

**We come from the dry and dusty places of the world
where we work and live;**

We come looking for green pastures and
still waters that will restore our souls.

**We come from the dark and shadowy places
where the world deals death;**

We come hoping to hear the Word of God
that will comfort and support us.

**We come hungering and thirsting for righteousness
and longing for blessing;**

We come to have our hunger sated,
our thirst slaked, and our lives anointed.

Let us worship the Lord our God.

Hymn VU 345 "Come, Children, Join to Sing"

Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!

Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!

Let all with heart and voice,
saved by God's gracious choice,
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!

Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!

Christ calls his people friends,
the helpless he defends,
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!

Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!

The whole creation o'er
let all God's love adore,
singing for evermore: Hallelujah!

Opening Prayer

Holy One, we come this morning searching; searching for something that will fill the empty space in our souls. We have lusted for the goods of this world, and envied those who have more than we do. We have looked out for number one, and only offered hollow words to those who live in despair. We have come to realize that those things do not, cannot nourish our souls, and so we ask you to forgive us our folly and help turn us around. Lead us into all those places where we will discover your hope waiting to nourish and restore our famished souls. Lead us into all those places where we may discover the joy of filling the emptiness of others by emptying ourselves. Lead us into all those places where acts of kindness and hands overflowing with mercy speak louder than platitudes. Call us back from our wayward lives, so we may find rest in your heart, healing from your hands, and life together in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Time for the Young and the Young @



Anthem: "The Lord is My Shepherd" [Howard Goodall] Choir of Wells Cathedral

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLxdb3ov-zE>

Responsive Reading: Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Scripture: John 10:11-18

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care 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 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

*For those of you who are interested, the other readings for this week are: **Acts 4:5-12; 1 John 3: 16-24.** You can look them up on www.biblegateway.com and search for the passage..... in any translation you prefer (ie. King James - KJV, NKJV, NRSV, etc.)*

Meditation: “Exclusive, or Inclusive?”

Hymn VU 766 “As the Deer Pants for the Water”

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you;
you alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

Refrain: You alone are my strength, my shield
 to you alone may my spirit yield;
 you alone are my heart's desire,
 and I long to worship you.

I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy;
you alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye. **R**

You're my friend and you are my brother,
even though you are a king;
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything! **R**

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

The Lord is our shepherd. We listen to our shepherd, and follow where the shepherd leads. The Good Shepherd leads us into uncomfortable places and through unknown dangers. We are led to people and places in this world we would rather not be led to. We are led there in order to be of service, as the Good Shepherd was of service to the vulnerable and marginalized of his time. We serve in many concrete ways – driving people to medical appointments and vaccination centres, filling shelves at the local foodbank, and many other ways – and for those places and times where we cannot serve in person, we offer financial support so that ministry can happen.

Good Shepherd, these are the offerings of our time, talent and treasure.

Use them to restore the soul of those whose souls are shattered.

Use them to set a banquet in front of those who are hungry.

Use them to anoint those who are last and least in this world.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

Creator of green pastures and still waters, you lead us through the valleys of the shadow of death to bring us to places of holy rest, and to places of holy work. As we wander the places of darkness in our lives and in this world, give us your rod, your teachings, to support us, and extend your staff, your crook, to pull us back out of harm's way.

Restore the soul of your church, especially this week we pray for Calvary United Church in London as they search for a new shepherd.

Set a banquet before us in the presence of all your children, friends and enemies alike, especially the people of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Comfort those who mourn, especially the friends and family of Roger Henry

Anoint with your healing oil those whose health and wellbeing is compromised, especially: Rev. Lynne Allin, Jim Duffin, Rob Ford, Andy Linell, Cathy Sargent, Lisa Sawyer, Barb Thompson, and their loved ones and caregivers and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

Give us hope, Good Shepherd, hope in our hands to open new doors; hope in our eyes to see new possibilities; hope in our hearts to live by faith; for in hope we shall make it out of the valley of darkness and into Your light, where we shall dwell forevermore.

All this we pray in the name of the Good Shepherd, who taught us to pray, singing.....

(VU 959)

Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now as forever.

Amen.

Hymn VU 325 "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"

Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord, and precious,
binding all the church in one,
holy Zion's help for ever,
and its confidence alone.

To this temple where we call you,
come, O Lord of hosts, today;
with your faithful loving-kindness
hear your servants as they pray,
and your fullest benediction
shed within its walls away.

Here bestow on all your servants
what they ask of you to gain,
what they gain from you for ever
with the blessed to retain,
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.

Laud and honour to the Father,
laud and honour to the Son,
laud and honour to the Spirit,
ever three and ever one,
one in might, and one in glory,
while unending ages run.

Commissioning and Benediction

May the blessing of God go before you.

May God's grace and peace abound.

May God's Spirit live within you.

May God's love wrap you 'round.

May God's blessing remain with you always.

May you walk on holy ground.

Sung Response: VU 884 "You Shall Go Out with Joy"

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace;
the mountains and the hills will break forth before you;
there'll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field
will clap, will clap their hands!

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands, (clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands (clap, clap)
while you go out with joy.

Postlude: "Just as I am Without One Plea" by William Bradbury arr. by Cindy Berry

Announcements.....

Scripture Lessons for next week: Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8