

Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church

310 First Avenue South 715-423-0180 www.wrmoravian.org

“Sharing Christ, Serving People”

Sunday, April 25, 2021

4th Sunday of Easter

CALL TO WORSHIP

WELCOME

HYMN

Christian Hearts, in Love United

1. Christian hearts, in love united, seek alone in Jesus rest;
has he not your love excited? Then let love inspire each breast.
Members — on our Head depending, lights — reflecting him, our Sun,
brethren — his commands attending, we in him, our Lord, are one.
2. Come then, come, O flock of Jesus, covenant with him anew;
unto him, who conquered for us, pledge we love and service true;
and should our love's union holy firmly linked no more remain,
wait ye at his footstool lowly, till he draw it close again.
3. Grant, Lord, that with thy direction, "Love each other," we comply,
aiming with unfeigned affection thy love to exemplify;
let our mutual love be glowing; thus the world will plainly see
that we, as on one stem growing, living branches are in thee.
4. O that such may be our union as thine with the Father is,
and not one of our communion e'er forsake the path of bliss;
may our light break forth with brightness, from thy light reflected shine;
thus the world will bear us witness that we, Lord, are truly thine.

SCRIPTURES:

Psalm 23

L: ¹The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

C: ²**He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; ³he restores my soul.**

L: He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

C: ⁴**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.**

L: ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

C: ⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

John 10:11-18

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The 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. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I 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. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No 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.”

GOOD SHEPHERD LITURGY

Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, foretold by prophets, priests and kings. He was destined to be a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel. (Matt. 2:3-6)

As our Good Shepherd, he gave his life for the sake of his sheep and made a way for us to enter his pastures in peace.

Jesus makes my heart rejoice, I'm his sheep and know his voice;
he's a shepherd kind and gracious, and his pastures are delicious;
constant love to me he shows, yea, my very name he knows.

Trusting his mild staff always, I go in and out in peace;
he will feed me with the treasure of his grace in riches measure;
when a-thirst to him I cry, living water he'll supply.

Should not I for gladness leap, led by Jesus as his sheep?
For when these blessed days are over to the arms of my dear Savior
I shall be conveyed to rest. Amen, yea, my lot is blessed.

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus lays down his life for the sheep. A hireling, who does not know the sheep, will run away if a wolf comes close. The hired hand does not care for the sheep.

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep, as only a shepherd can. He calls his sheep by name and welcomes them into his pasture.

The Good Shepherd has made us whole by the blood of the eternal covenant. He has made us complete in everything good so that we may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight.

May the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, keep us close to him.

(Heb. 13:20-21)

Lord Jesus Christ, we pray now for all who confess you as Lord and Savior. There are many sheep but only one Shepherd. For all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. We pray as well for all those who are still far away from God's saving power:

for those who have strayed from the flock;

for those who are confused and distracted by falsehoods;

for all who are close to us in faith and heritage;

and for all who have never heard the name of Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

We pray for the salvation that comes from profession and confidence in the strong saving name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd.

He will gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

(Matt. 25, Isaiah 40)

Savior, like a shepherd lead us; much we need your tender care.

In your pleasant pastures feed us; for our use your folds prepare.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, yours we are.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, yours we are.

You have promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
you have mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse and power to free.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

Grace, mercy, and peace will follow us all the days of our lives.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH PASTORAL PRAYER

With the 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**

SCRIPTURE:

1 John 3:16-24

¹⁶We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

MESSAGE

OFFERTORY PRAYER with PRAYER OF SERVANTHOOD

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. We give you thanks for your constant presence. Through seasons of stability and change, you are with us, calling us out of ourselves into the world to serve others. Grant that we may be united in love for each other and for those we haven’t yet met. Grant us wisdom, patience, and perseverance as we work through the details and challenges of the ministry you have placed before us. Continue, O Lord, to bless the work of our hands. Bless the work of our hands. Amen.

HYMN

Blessed Be the Tie that Binds

Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Before our Father’s throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.

From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH ALIVE

BENEDICTION

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WATCHWORD FOR THE WEEK

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 10:11

Prayer Concerns & Announcements

For Daily Prayer

Patty Beyer, Bonnie Irwin, Darla Knobeck Labarge, Jennie Ferkey, Peggy Hanneman,

Jan Baker’s daughter (Natalie), the Kelnhofer family, Gloria Reisinger,

Lori Mischnick (Lorraine Abbott’s daughter)

Nursing/Assisted Living Residents: Ethelmae Schulz, Dorothy Langsdorf, Ella Scholze, Mary Lou Eklund,

Karen Zynda, Mavis Newman

At home: Marlene Young, Dick Schoechert, Gloria Papineau, Paul & Marie Knipple
Servicemen: Paul & David Eklund, Mason Fellowes
The frontline people who are caring for those who have Covid-19
Those who have lost loved ones to or are battling Covid-19
Our brothers and sisters affected by natural disasters
Peace for our country

Announcement

The **April Joyful Noise** offering will be given to the Rapids Backpack Program. In May, the Joyful Noise offering will go to Jeremiah's Crossing.

Giving Thankfully

Our congregation is still offering its ministry in this new context, but cannot do so without your support. We ask that you prayerfully consider supporting our congregation's ministry.

Offerings can be made in these ways:

1. Mail in your offering
2. Drop off your offering at the church
3. Give electronically – through your bank or by going to mmfa.info, clicking the “Giving Portal” link and choosing our congregation.
4. Portal” link and choosing our congregation.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

Psalm 147:5

Shepherds

Jesus fulfills Old Testament promises from several of the prophets that God himself will come to shepherd His people. Isaiah 40:11 declares, “He will feed his flock like a shepherd,” and in Ezekiel 34:15 we read, “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, says the LORD.”

For Jesus to use the example of being a good shepherd makes sense, because that was one of the major occupations throughout Palestine in his day. His listeners knew about them. People that cared for flocks of sheep were of the lowest socioeconomic level, with little to no education. They had an important responsibility, however, of providing for and protecting sheep, sometimes sacrificially.

“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” implies that this kind of shepherd stands ready to sacrifice his total self if need be. *Three times* in these eight verses we hear Jesus make this prophetic statement. It alludes, of course, to his sacrificing his own life for us as the means of our reconciliation to God.

In these days of 2021, my guess is that few of us know any individuals who actually work as a *shepherd*, but it's quite likely that we do know people who give of themselves to *shepherd* others along the right path. This too requires providing what's needed (direction, encouragement, friendship) plus offering protection if circumstances warrant. And yes, there could be some sacrifice involved, especially in the giving of personal time.

How willing are we to intentionally shepherd others toward a life of loving God and our neighbors, thereby helping to bring them into the fold so they can “listen to Jesus' voice”? This is the voice of the one Good Shepherd, who “knows his own and his own know him.”

Donna Hurt, Home Moravian Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

The Moravian Church

Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 25, 2021

