

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**  
**May 3, 2020**  
**Cross of Glory Lutheran Church**  
**Brooklyn Center, MN**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid:  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**  
**Amen**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

**GATHERING HYMN            #380 Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!            Verses 1, 2 and 5**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1</b> Hallelujah! Jesus lives!<br/>He is now the Living One;<br/>from the gloomy halls of death<br/>Christ, the conqueror, has gone,<br/>bright forerunner to the skies<br/>of his people, yet to rise.</p>       | <p><b>2</b> Jesus lives! Why do you weep?<br/>Why that sad and mournful sigh?<br/>Christ who died our brother here<br/>lives our brother still on high,<br/>lives forever to bestow<br/>blessings on his church below.</p> |
| <p><b>5</b> Hallelujah! Angels, sing!<br/>Join with us in hymns of praise.<br/>Let your chorus swell the strain<br/>which our feebler voices raise:<br/>Glory to our God above<br/>and on earth his peace and love!</p> |  |

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.            **And also with you.**

**KYRIE**                      **Pages 98-99**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen, amen.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE**                      **page 101**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God. Power and riches, wisdom and strength, and honor and blessing and glory are his.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing and honor, glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**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.**

**PSALM 23**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures  
and leads me beside still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my soul, O LORD,  
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*Keith Williams*

**GOSPEL****John 10:1-15**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

<sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.****SERMON****“ENOUGH”**

John 10:1-15

Grace to you and peace in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

Today is the fourth Sunday after Easter in our church year. However, it is probably more accurate to call it “Sheep Sunday!” Did you notice our readings for today? They are literally infested with sheep! The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm says that “the Lord is my shepherd.” Now if the Lord is our shepherd what does that make you and me? Sheep! In our Gospel from John chapter 10, Jesus says that he is the good shepherd who has even laid down his life for the sheep. Again, you and I are referred to as sheep. Now I don’t know about you, but I’m not sure that I like that!

In my experience with sheep, it seems to me that they are the geekiest animals on the face of the earth. They can’t run. Right? They waddle. Sheep may start out cute, cuddly, and calming but they rarely stay that way through adulthood. Why in the Lord’s eyes can’t you and I be compared to a horse? When a horse runs it takes big, long elegant strides. Horses gallop so gracefully. But sheep.... they waddle and believe me it is not pretty! In my opinion there is no one more chicken than a sheep...except a chicken! Worst of all, they are prone to wander off and get themselves into all kinds of trouble.

The word trouble certainly describes the flock of sheep that my Dad had on the farm. They were constantly getting out of the pasture fences and wandering off. I could never understand why he had them. They provided no financial profit and it cost more to have them than they were worth. Yet, my Dad liked those sheep. In spite of all the shenanigans they got into, he simply delighted in them and faithfully cared for them.

I remember one spring day, our sheep decided to go on a “spring fling.” They got out of the pasture and wandered off. My Dad had me go with him in the pickup and drive around to the neighbors asking them if they had seen our sheep. (Do you know how embarrassing that is?!) After several days, the sheep were still not to be found. The look on my Dad’s face was a mixture of concern and sadness. I suggested to him that we just donate them to whoever would take them. This suggestion did not go over very well. Instead, my Dad hired a pilot to take him up in his small airplane to search for these pesky creatures. And wouldn’t you know it - luck was not with me! From the air my Dad was able to spot his beloved animals mixed in with another farmer’s sheep miles from our home.

The reunion of my Dad and his sheep was amazing. He called out to them. They pricked up their ears. His was a voice that they knew so well and so they came. It looked to me like they were smiling. They didn’t even have the decency to hang their heads in shame. They were smiling and my Dad

was smiling too. Would the sheep cause trouble again? Yes! Many times! Even so, no matter how many times they went their own way, it never changed how much my Dad valued them.

My Dad's commitment to his wayward sheep sounds a lot like God, doesn't it? Each of us hopefully knows how human we are - how "sheep-like" we can be. The truth is, God knows this about us too. Yet amazingly God values us; God delights in us. In God's eyes we are enough - we are God's beloved. This, I believe, is the message of our Gospel for today. Not only is it a good message but it is a needed message!

Every day, you and I are hearing messages that tell us that we are insufficient or not good enough. These messages come in a variety of ways. Sometimes they come from other people's hurtful words or critical comments. All too often, we are the ones who heap diminishing words on ourselves. In our self-talk, how often do we say things like: "I'm not very capable" or "I'm not worthy of that" or "I don't measure up." Added to these messages, each of us is daily bombarded with a barrage of ads that seek to convince us that we are not enough. These ads work precisely by creating in us a sense of lack and a profound sense of insufficiency. The message of the ads is that the only way to satisfy this lack is to be more or do more or get more. The truth is, these "not enough" messages are a lie. They are like that thief that only wants to rob us of who we truly are in God. These "not enough" messages take from us the abundant life of meaning and purpose that God want for us now.

Jesus says in our Gospel, "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly." Jesus does not only make this promise. He puts his money where his mouth is. More accurately, he puts his life where his promise is: "I am the good shepherd" Jesus says, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Why? Why does Jesus lay down his life? The answer is: To tell us that we are in fact ENOUGH! Jesus, especially in John's gospel, doesn't die in order to make some kind of payment to God or to satisfy God's wrath because of our sin. For the gospel writer John, Jesus is the revealer - the one who comes to make the invisible God visible and the unapproachable God accessible. Jesus comes to tell us that we are already God's beloved! We need no more stuff, or status, or achievements, or talents, or savings accumulation to be worthy of God's love. Jesus, the gate keeper to the kingdom of God, proclaims that in God's love and mercy we already have abundant life now - we are enough.

Because we are surrounded by so many wrong messages, we often need to be reminded of what God says about us. In fact, let's practice affirming this promise right now. Would you repeat out loud: "**I am God's beloved child. I am enough.**" Now if you are worshiping with others today, will you turn to someone near you and say out loud: "**You are God's beloved. You are enough.**" Please know that claiming this promise is not something that you need to be shy about. This promise is all about God! My friend, who you truly are is God's gift to you!

There is great power in proclaiming to ourselves and to others that we are enough - we are God's beloved. Consider the writer Mary Ann Bird. She relates how she was born with a cleft palate. Because she had a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth and garbled speech, she was often made fun of by the other children. Mary Ann was convinced that no one outside of her family loved her. But then there was a teacher in the second grade, Mrs. Leonard. It was time for the annual hearing test. Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everybody in the class. She would stand a short distance behind the student, have the student cover one ear, and the teacher would whisper and have the student repeat it back. Often the teacher would say something like, "The sky is blue." or "Do you have new shoes?" With her back to Mrs. Leonard, Mary Ann waited for the words. Finally, Mrs. Leonard said in a whisper, "I wish you were my little girl." Mary Ann couldn't believe it! She said that these seven words literally changed her life!

People of God, we have a God who doesn't just whisper, "You are enough." God shouts for all creation to hear that YOU are God's beloved and nothing will ever change God's mind about that.

Honestly, I would still rather be compared to a horse... or a German shepherd dog...or even a lion. Yet, we are so "sheep-like!" May we always rejoice that we are God's sheep! You and I are God's sheep! Our amazing and loving God just delights in saying that we are God's beloved and in God we are - and always will be - ENOUGH! Thanks be to God. Amen.

**HYMN #789 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**

**1** Savior, like a shepherd lead us;  
much we need your tender care.  
In your pleasant pastures feed us,  
for our use your fold prepare.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have bought us; we are yours.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have bought us; we are yours.

**2**

**verses 1, 2 and 4**

We are yours; in love befriend us,  
be the guardian of our way;  
keep your flock, from sin defend us,  
seek us when we go astray.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
hear us children when we pray.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
hear us children when we pray.

**4** Early let us seek your favor,  
early let us do your will;  
blessed Lord and only Savior,  
with your love our spirits fill.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have loved us, love us still.  
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,  
you have loved us, love us still.

**CONFESSION OF FAITH Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius  
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he  
rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will  
come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the  
resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

Our Father everlasting  
The all creating One  
God Almighty  
Through Your Holy Spirit  
Conceiving Christ the Son  
Jesus our Savior

**This I Believe**

Our judge and our defender  
Suffered and crucified  
Forgiveness is in You  
Descended into darkness  
You rose in glorious life  
Forever seated high

**Worship Team**

I believe in God our Father  
I believe in Christ the Son  
I believe in the Holy Spirit  
Our God is three in One  
I believe in the resurrection  
That we will rise again  
For I believe in the Name of Jesus

I believe in the saints' communion  
And in Your holy Church  
I believe in the resurrection  
When Jesus comes again  
I believe in life eternal  
I believe in the virgin birth  
For I believe in the Name of Jesus

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**Merciful Father,**

**We offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our  
possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself  
for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs. Lord God, thank you that you call us your beloved daughters and sons and that in you we are enough. Help us to believe and to claim this promise that we might know the joy of your abundant life for us now. Embolden us to share your words of love and affirmation to all that we meet. Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious and loving God, you are our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. We need your help, O God, as we deal with the Covid-19 virus. We give to you our fears and anxieties. Help us to calmly and lovingly trust in you. We ask that you care for all who are affected by this pandemic. Please bless the work of health professionals, care providers, essential workers, government officials, school and community leaders. Grant them strength and wisdom. Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we pray for this congregation. As we journey in this time together, may we encourage and support one another. Help us to stand by each other in prayer and in love. Give us understanding and wisdom to know and to believe that even though we are physically apart we are united together as one in you. Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us always to prayer. **Our father who art....**

## BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen**

## SENDING FORTH SONG

**#364 Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia!**

**Worship Team.**

**1** Christ has arisen, alleluia.

Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.

For our redeemer burst from the tomb,  
even from death, dispelling its gloom.

**Refrain**

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia!

Jesus is living, alleluia!

**2** For three long days the grave did its worst  
until its strength by God was dispersed.

He who gives life did death undergo,  
and in its conquest his might did show. *Refrain*

**3** The angel said to them, "Do not fear.

You look for Jesus who is not here.

See for yourselves the tomb is all bare.

Only the graveclothes are lying there." *Refrain*

## DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**