

19th Sunday after Pentecost
October 11, 2020
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Faithful God, have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We judge others before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before the needs of our neighbors. Humble us, have mercy on us, and turn us again to life in you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN #502 (vss 1, 2, 4 and 6) The King of Love My Shepherd Is

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine forever.</p> <p>4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
thy rod and staff my comfort still;
thy cross before to guide me.</p> | <p>2 Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth
and, where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.</p> <p>6 And so, through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.</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

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

Refrain: 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. *Refrain*

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. *Refrain*

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray . . . **Shepherd God, in you we are part of a different kind of flock. As you lead us down paths of righteousness, embolden us for the journey, and open us to your loving presence along the way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

READING: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

²The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.

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

⁴Though 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.

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

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

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Mark Trease and Keith Williams

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:1-14

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But

they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON **Pastor Ali Tranvik**

Psalm 23 is one of the most familiar, most well-known, most beloved words in all of scripture. The beautiful words of this psalm have been written into songs (some of which we're singing today), and painted into art. They've been recited at hospital bed sides and read at funerals, cross-stitched into wall hangings and posted on billboards, memorized by Sunday school children and prayed in the midnight hours when worry keeps us awake.

But as with anything that is this well-known, the words of Psalm 23 risk becoming rote—something that is recited or rehearsed instead of confessed. I admit there are times I pray Psalm 23 without really thinking about the words I'm saying. This psalm has become so familiar and so common for me that I tend to forget just how *unfamiliar* and *uncommon* this shepherding God's ways actually are from the ways of the world.

For example, the first line of the psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd." The world says that I am independent; but calling God shepherd implies that we are sheep, and sheep are creatures that are utterly *dependent*, creatures that tend to stray when left to themselves, creatures that couldn't "follow" their shepherd if they tried.

Then the psalm says, "I shall not want." This too is unfamiliar to the ways of the world, which tell us that we *shall* want, that to be happy we need more stuff, that we are consumers who must constantly consume more because there is never enough. Our world (our economy) depends on our wanting.

Then the psalm says, "He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters." The world tells us that rest is laziness, that we must constantly produce. But God-the-Shepherd invites us to—insists that we—stop running and rest, that our souls might actually be restored.

The psalm's subtle subversiveness continues: "You prepare a table in the presence of my enemies." The worldly wisdom when it comes to enemies is typically not to wine-and-dine with them, right? The world will say let's smite them! Let's fight them! The God of Psalm 23 says, let's feast!

This psalm is one of the most common and comforting psalms there is, but there's also something cutting about it. As one biblical scholar puts it: "[The ways of the shepherd] are often scorned. Walking in paths of righteousness for the sake of God's name will put us at odds with the rest of the world" (Koester). These paths, in other words, are not the clearly-marked highways or well-worn paths. This shepherding God leads us to unconventional places, in unpopular directions, on paths less trodden...

The Hebrew word for path in Psalm 23 is *ma'galim*. Elsewhere in the Hebrew bible, it's translated as "tracks" or "entrenchments," or even "ruts" made in the mud by the wheels of an ox-cart (LeMon). Which means that God's "paths of righteousness" are less like a well-groomed sidewalk and more like divots in the mud, ruts that cut through the level terrain. To be led by this

shepherd God, one scholar claims, is to find God's groove, and it's a righteous groove at that! (LeMon).

Now, if we look at the psalm, we'll find that these grooves that guide us don't go straight from the green pastures (23:2) to the house of the lord where we shall dwell forever (23:6). These paths where God leads us take us to some other places in between—to dark valleys, to our enemies.

It's quite possible that it was Psalm 23 that Jesus had in mind when he told his disciples: "See I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves...you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me...and you will be hated by all because of my name" (Davis, Matt. 10:16-23).

Guided by this wayward shepherd, us sheep won't always stay safely and securely in the pasture. Being led along "ruts" of righteousness, we may find ourselves in places of danger and risk. We may find ourselves caught up in some trouble. Which is why it would be great to just skip over those valleys, to circumvent the enemies, take a short-cut to the dwelling in the house of the Lord part! But there's a story I want to tell you that suggests that if we try and do that, we just might miss the presence of God along the way...

There is a Lutheran pastor and author named Heidi Neumark. Heidi is now the pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in New York City. During college, Heidi took a year off and lived on John's Island off the coast of South Carolina as part of a rural service program. St. John's was a community of descendants of enslaved people, who Heidi said were gracious in allowing her to listen in as they sat around, chewing snuff and telling stories. One of the people whose stories she loved the most was an old woman named Miss Ellie, who lived down the dirt road from Heidi in a 1-room wooden home. Most afternoons, the two would sit in old rocking chairs on the front porch and drink sweet tea, before Miss Ellie would leave to visit her friend Netta, whom she'd known since they were kids. In order to get to Netta's house, Miss Ellie had to walk for miles through fields of tall grass, home to numerous poisonous snakes: coral snakes, rattlesnakes, water moccasins, and copperheads (aka my personal nightmare).

Netta's home was actually not that far from Miss Ellie's place as the crow flies, but there was a stream that cut across the fields. You had to walk quite a distance to get to the place where it narrowed enough to cross. Heidi felt sorry for Miss Ellie, who in her old age would have to push through the thick summer heat and marsh mud, not to mention the snakes. But one day, Heidi thought of the perfect plan. She'd build a simple plank bridge across the stream near Miss Ellie's house, which would significantly shorten Miss Ellie's path. So Heidi bought the wood, recruited a few extra hands, and built the bridge in just a couple of days. She could hardly wait to go back to Miss Ellie's house, tell her the news, and see her reaction.

When she got there, Heidi gushed with the news of the new route to Netta's house. But Miss Ellie's face did not register the grateful look Heidi expected. Miss Ellie stood there for a long time, looking puzzled, and then she shook her head and said, "Child, I don't need a shortcut." She went on to tell Heidi all about the friends she kept up with on the way to Netta's. The shortcut would cut her off from Ms. Jenkins, who she always swapped gossip with, from the "old folks" who she'd check in on, from Miss Hunter's place, where she'd trade quilt scraps for the best raisin bread you've ever had. "Child," she said again, "can't take shortcuts if you want friends in this world. Shortcuts don't mix with love."

If we are guided by God the shepherd, if we walk in "ruts" of righteousness, then we too will find ourselves on such paths—on paths that lead through metaphorical and maybe not-so-metaphorical muddy fields and long grasses and snakes. On roads less traveled (not in some trendy or "instagram-able" way). On paths that may not even be discernible as paths to the rest of the world.

What will these paths look like for us, here at Cross of Glory? Will they lead you into tutoring or pen-pal relationships with students and families at Progeny academy as they walk through this difficult semester? Will they lead you to reach out to someone you know in our community who is struggling and walk with them in their dark valley? Will they lead you to dinner tables where

people go because they're hungry, and where you go because you're hungry too? Will they lead us into relationships with our neighbors at CAPI who are immigrants and refugees from around the world who may be able to introduce us to the "raisin bread" of their own cultures? Will they lead you to front porches to listen to the stories of the Miss Ellies of Brooklyn Center?

Whatever these paths look like for you—for us—Miss Ellie shows us that it's often on the unfamiliar, unanticipated paths where we experience *love* in unfamiliar and unanticipated ways, through unfamiliar and unanticipated people. These paths, like Miss Ellie's, may be a bit roundabout, they may be inconvenient. They may be difficult to walk, dangerous at times. They may even lead us through valleys of the shadow of death. But fear no evil, for we do not walk alone. On this path, there will be company. There will be community. There will be tables and feasts with friends (and enemies!). There will be love, as Miss Ellie says. And that's because there also will be *God*—the God of love who walks with us, who leads us, and who guides us, wherever the muddy paths and "ruts" of righteousness lead. And if we're lucky, perhaps there will be some good raisin bread too.

Sources:

- Nancy Koester, "Commentary on Psalm 23," *Working Preacher*, Oct 12, 2014.
- Ellen Davis, "Christian Toughness," a sermon on Psalm 23, Duke University Chapel, June 14, 2020.
- Joel LeMon, "Commentary on Psalm 23," *Working Preacher*, Apr 15, 2015.
- Neumark, Heidi. *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey Through the South Bronx* (Boston: Beacon Press: 2003), 14-18.

HYMN OF THE DAY #768 Lead Me, Guide Me

Refrain Lead me, guide me, along the way;
For if you lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with thee.
Lead me, O Lord, Lead me.

1 I am weak and I need thy strength and pow'r
To help me over my weakest hour.
Help me through the darkness thy fact to see.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. **Refrain**

2 Help me tread in the paths of righteousness,
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.
I am putting all my trust in thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. **Refrain**

3 I am lost if you take your hand from me,
I am blind without thy light to see.
Lord, just always let me thy servant be.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. **Refrain**

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.

OFFERTORY

Thank you for continuing to support and sustain the work of Cross of Glory during this time.

Please send your offering to the church (5929 Brooklyn Blvd, Brooklyn Center, MN 55429), or contact Sue in the office to learn more about how to set up automatic, online giving. We are grateful for your generosity!

OFFERTORY RESPONSE I Am Not Alone

1 When I walk through deep waters
I know that You will be with me.
When I'm standing in the fire
I will not be overcome.
Through the valley of the shadow
I will not fear.

Chorus I am not alone.
I am not alone.
You will go before me.
You will never leave me. *(repeat)*

2 In the midst of deep sorrow
I see Your light is breaking through.
The dark of night will not overtake me.
I am pressing into You.
Lord, You fight my ev'ry battle
And I will not fear.

Bridge You amaze me, redeem me,
You call me as Your own.
You amaze me, redeem me,
You call me as Your own. *(repeat)*

3 You're my strength. You're my defender.
You're my refuge in the storm.
Through these trials You've always been faithful.
You bring healing to my soul.

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have given us the gifts of your good creation. Nourish us at the tables we find ourselves today, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Through the words of today's psalm, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need...

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

Pastor: God our Shepherd, you lead us down paths of righteousness. We give you thanks, that in places of both comfort and danger, your presence never leaves us.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

We pray for refugees who are fleeing from home; for survivors of natural disasters whose homes have been destroyed, for neighbors seeking stable housing.

He leads me beside still waters;

We give you thanks for the waters of this earth that give life. For the rivers, streams, and oceans that sustain life, for the rains that replenish the earth, and for the food and drink that nourish all creatures within it.

He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

We pray for all those who are wandering and weary and worn. Restore them, O God, and give them rest.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me,

We pray for those struggling with depression, anxiety, loneliness, and grief, for those affected by Covid-19 and other illnesses, for those living in prison, for those trapped in situations of poverty, addiction, abuse, or violence.

Your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

We lift up all who are in need of your comfort, especially Bev Hoium, Gil Hartlage, Terry Stejskal, Jeanetta Barhorst, Vicky Jacobson, and the family of Marian Priest as they mourn the death of Marian's brother.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

Forgive us for failing to see your image in all our neighbors, and lead us to tables of repentance and reconciliation.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

While the world is sold on scarcity, you offer us radical abundance. Empower us to live into this gift, boldly sharing our time, our unique gifts and passions, and our financial resources as we work for justice and peace in our communities.

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.

For the gift of dwelling with you, and for the gift of you dwelling among us, we give you thanks, God our Shepherd.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered together as one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us...

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.

BLESSING

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into life. **Amen.**

SENDING FORTH SONG O My God

O my God, What can I do without you?
Every day you make my life brand new
O my God, What can I do without you?
I'm in love with you

*Solo: When everyone thought I was good for nothing
You saw the best in me.
You allowed mountains in my way
So that I could get all this courage.
Everything was taken away.
They mocked at me and called me names
And said I'm finished,
But your love has lifted me.*

O my God, What can I do without you?
Every day you make my life brand new
O my God, What can I do without you?
I'm in love with you

*Solo: You are my joy and sorrow,
My hope for tomorrow.
When I am sad you make me glad.
You are my strength in weakness,
My cure in sickness.
You are the lifter of my head.
What can I do without you?
How can I live without you?
O Lord I'm in love with you!*

O my God, What can I do without you?
Every day you make my life brand new
O my God, What can I do without you?
I'm in love with you

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Love your neighbor.

Thanks be to God.

The Order of Service is from Evangelical Lutheran Worship which is commended for use in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Sundays and Seasons © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #024779. All rights reserved.

Congregational Support as of 8/31/2020

Annual Budget: \$225,000.00

Year to Date Budgeted: \$150,166.68

Year to Date Received: \$147,842.03

Difference: \$-2,324,65

Community Announcements

- Following the Zoom worship service, you're invited to Virtual Coffee Hour, an opportunity to connect with one another for a brief time of small-group fellowship. Friends, family, and first-timers are warmly welcome!
- Join us for Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am on Zoom as we explore the texts for the upcoming week.
- Third quarter giving statements were sent out this past week. If you have any questions about your 2020 pledge or giving history, contact Sue in the office (svukelich@crossofglory.us).
- Progeny Academy is still in need of tutors, mentors, and pen pals. If you're interested in supporting a student this semester from home, please reach out to Ali.
- Please contact Pastor Ali with any other announcements or pastoral concerns and needs. You can reach her by email (atranvik@crossofglory.us) or phone (763-533-8602).