



Emmanuel United Church of Christ

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

We Welcome You on this 4th Sunday of Easter.

Service of the Word - April 25, 2021

9:30 AM

The Gathering

Jesus is the good Shepherd going before His sheep, bidding them follow Him, and ever leading them onwards with the sweet word, Come.
Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Ringling of the Bell

Our Life Together

The Solemn Declaration

Prelude

*Call to Worship

Leader: With grace flowing, the poet sings the opening lines of the famous prayer, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want."

All: We hear the Psalmist's contentment and wonder about our own.

Leader: Settled on the ground, with grass tickling their toes, the psalmist rests, "God makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."

All: We hear their deep need for rest and wonder about our own.

Leader: With a deep sigh, the psalmist declares, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. You prepare a table before me. You anoint me. My cup overflows."

All: We recognize their bold courage and wonder about our own.

Leader: Remembering God's faithfulness, the psalmist finds words to carry with them, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long."

All: We hear their faithful trust and wonder about our own.

Leader: Holy Spirit of Rest and Renewal, in this time of worship inspire us with words both ancient and new so that we may find the words that connect us to You.

All: Amen and amen.

*Opening Prayer (Unison)

Faithful God, we begin today by giving you thanks. Your love endures forever, it never fails. Though there are many ways in which we have failed, we have not exceeded the supply of your mercy and grace. We thank you for revealing yourself to us through your word. As we gather for worship today, we pray that we would hear your message of

love for our lives. We ask that your Holy Spirit would be at work, opening our ears to hear and our hearts to receive your word. May we be transformed into your likeness. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

The Refreshment of Forgiveness

Call to Confession

Confession of Sin

Holy One, we hear the comforting ancient poetry of the psalmist but wonder, is it true?

Will you really provide for what we need?

Will you bring us to a place of rest?

Will you protect us from enemies, even when they share our dinner table?

We confess that rather than being only filled with holy wonder, we are also filled with skepticism at the ancient words.

We can quickly tally up the times

we didn't feel provided for or protected from danger.

We count the times we could not catch a break when we desperately needed it.

So Holy One, shepherd our busy minds back to the here and now, help our spirits forgive the grudges we hold, and invite us to experience You as truly present. In these moments of quiet, offer us rest for a moment.

(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Beloved People of God, there is wisdom in our questions, but God is steadfast. God's presence is unwavering and will accompany us through every terrifying valley. God's spirit is unshakeable and will sit with us even in the presence of formidable foes. God's love is relentless and will offer us goodness and mercy all the days of our life.

All: Amen and amen.

*Affirmation of Faith

We know that God is in the world—was and is and will be. God made it all, and continues to renew and remake and resurrect.

We know God best in the life of Jesus, who was and is our maker of hope, the one who saves.

We know the power and energy of God in the Holy Spirit.

We are filled with God's joy and pledged to discipleship and love.

We trust in God. We celebrate God. We work together for justice and peace through God.

We choose the ways of Christ. We are never alone.

Thanks be to God!

The Gift of the Word

Prayer for Illumination

The Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson	Psalm 23
New Testament Lesson	1 John 3:16-24
Gospel Lesson	John 10:11-18

Sermon A Sheep's Point of View Pastor Jan

Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts

Call to Offering

Offertory

***Prayer of Dedication**

**Loving God, bless these gifts and all the ways in which we give.
May each of our gifts be a part of co-creating
and tending to the love, safety, belonging, and dignity
You envision for the world. Amen.**

The Ministry of Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (using debts and debtors)

***Benediction**

Leader: As you depart from this place, go with courage and go with trust
that the God who created you is also the One who will sustain you
and the One who will show you the way.

All: Until we meet again, may we be filled with curiosity, wonder, and
openness to God's tender leading.
Amen and amen.

*Indicates that all who are able, please stand. **Bold** print indicates unison reading.

Notice Someone Missing? *If so give them a call and let them know they are missed.*

