



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

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Week of April 25, 2021



Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: In the presence of God, we gather:

Many: People burdened and looking for comfort; folks whose spirits need a makeover.

One: Like little children, we surround God:

Many: Hoping for that touch which will refresh us; longing to be embraced in arms of love.

One: We look, and find a feast has been prepared for us:

Many: Bread which will give us life anew; the cup which overflows with grace and hope.

Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning. If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Community Prayer

O Lord, our shepherd, what good care you take of us. Let us be forever grateful to be your sheep, to know that you know each one of us by name. We are in a world of turmoil right now, God, and we need your guidance more than ever. Lead us to ways of justice and peace for all of your creation. Guide our hearts to reach out to our fellow sheep in the fold. Prevent us from straying too far from your path. Come after us when we are lost. We pray all of this in the name of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

www.fcclincoln.org/youtube

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Even if you are worshiping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.
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Scripture Reading

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.

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

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.

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

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. 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.'

Reflection

Meditation for the 4th Sunday of Easter

“One of God’s Sheep”

I once dated a guy from northeast Iowa who claimed that part of the world as “God’s country.” He was very proud to be from that region of the state. He was one of many people in my life who protested when I declared my love for sheep. He would exclaim that sheep were terrible and any cattle rancher would tell you so. Evidently, unlike cattle that graze the top of the grass, sheep tear the grass out from the roots destroying the pasture. No other livestock could graze a pasture once the sheep had gotten to it. I still persisted in my love for sheep. Now, I say this not as a person from a farm and not as someone who has raised sheep for a living. Even so, I love these woolly creatures and I have always loved the language in scripture that likens humanity to sheep. Unlike my friend from northeast Iowa, I regarded this connection between humanity and sheep as a compliment. When the Bible talks about Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the extension of this image is that we are his sheep.

When we affirm that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, we embrace the relationship between the sheep and the Shepherd. The author of our Gospel lesson today intentionally drew on imagery that wove its way through the Hebrew scriptures. Our passage from the Psalter is one of many examples of this. The author of John knew that all those hearing this description of Jesus would flash back to the characteristics of a Shepherd called by God. As our Shepherd, Jesus provides protection and tender care for us as his sheep. This protection involves saving the sheep from predators and, according to John, extended to giving up one’s life for the sheep. Caring for the sheep involved feeding them and tending to them when ill, injured, or when lambing. As our Shepherd, Jesus knows each of us by name.

So, as we continue with this imagery, it

follows that we are the sheep. At first glance this may seem to be a bad thing. Sheep are often described as dumb and stubborn animals. In my opinion, they often get bad press. But, with this image Jesus demonstrated the trust the sheep have in the shepherd. The sheep must be willing to follow the Shepherd wherever they are led. Like the sheep, we respond when called by name. Each of us is known intimately by the Shepherd. And we often miss it, but the sheep all have to stick together. So, is being a sheep of God so bad? Lest we shrug this image aside, we are reminded that Jesus is often referred to as the Lamb of God. Jesus, like a lamb, was vulnerable and innocent. Jesus entrusted himself to the love and care of God as a lamb would have trust in the shepherd. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, had confidence in the love and care of his shepherd, God.

Perhaps all this explains some of the attraction to our scripture lessons today. Psalm 23 is perhaps one of the best known passages from the Bible. Churched and unchurched people alike know it and many can recite it by heart. There is something appealing about the Shepherd described here. In just a few short verses the Psalmist covered all of life, the good times and the bad. The Shepherd artfully leads the sheep through dangerous and threatening territory. One of the most compelling components is the way in which the Shepherd leads the sheep to lush and green pastures. This Psalm of Trust really says it all in compelling and beautiful language. So, perhaps it is not so bad being “one of God’s Sheep” after all.

AMEN!

Prayers & Praises

April 25, 2021

In Our Church Family:

- Georgann Jordan
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Rae Hope Putney
- Jessica Vocasek
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Vic Burgess
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Mildred Brockemeyer

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Rick Pickel, for returning to chemotherapy, son of Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Fred Ogren, prayers for healing during hospitalization, son of LaVonne Ogren
- Tricia Gangwish, prayers for fighting breast cancer, aunt of Lindsay Swanson
- Will Oldenburg, prayers as he anticipates deployment to the Middle East, cousin of D'Arcy Blosser
- John Swanson's father, in nursing home with COVID-19
- Phyllis Jones, hospitalized with COVID, cousin of Dick Pickel
- Mark Carpenter, with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Roger Christianson, with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson
- Our sympathy to Kara Madison, upon the recent passing of her father

Friends:

- Karen, during cancer treatments, co-worker of Rhonda Ball
- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, diagnosed with glioblastoma, prayers for healing, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser
- Cedric Gibb, healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhart
- Tomi, healing prayers for cancer diagnosis, friend of Sara Lugn
- Carson Mousel, 13-year-old grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer
- Judy Nord, with bile duct cancer, friend of Dick & Roxie Pickel
- Betty Finck, praise for improvements, friend of Pastor Karen

Our Timothy's:

- Bruce Frogge at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE

In the Nebraska Region:

Grand Island FCC and Rev. Julie Western

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

Carlos Sediles serving in Mexico

Find more information and stories about

our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Text: Henry Williams Baker, 1868

Music: Irish Melody

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on this shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

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.

Though spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.

