

**Sunday April 25, 2021
Truth & Action's Gift**

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

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."

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **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. She leads me beside still waters. She restores my soul."

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **We hear the deep need for rest and wonder how we can experience this rest and encourage those in our circles of relationships all to be sources of rest, replenishment, and renewal for themselves and for others who may be ridden with tensions and anxieties.**

Opening Prayer **Unison** *(Out loud, but muted)*

Teach us God how we can each be present to each other in such a way that in the course of our encounters we may feel encouraged to remain at peace inwardly even when outward circumstances are in turmoil. Thank you God for the peace of heart allowing us to be creatively involved in the wider circles of our community. Amen.

Hymn # 252: Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

- 1) 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 brought us, yours we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have brought us, yours we are.

- 2) 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, you have brought us, yours we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have brought us, yours we are.
- 3) Let us always seek your favor; let us always do your will;
Jesus Christ our only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have brought us, yours we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have brought us, yours we are.

Prayer of Confession **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

**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.**

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Assurance of Pardon

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

Passing of the Peace (*unmute for Passing of the Peace*)

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: **And also with you!**

Reading

Karen Jones

Psalm 23 (NIV)

23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

23:3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

23:4 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.

23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

23:6 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.

1 John 3:16-20 (NIV)

3:16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us--and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

3:17 How 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?

3:18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

3:19 And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him

3:20 whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and God knows everything.

Special Music

Tom Gill

Gospel Reading

John 10:11-18 (NIV)

10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

10:12 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.

10:13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

10:14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

10:15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

10:16 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.

10:17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

10:18 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."

Musical Interlude

Sermon: Truth & Action's Gift

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People (unmute yourself to offer a request, giving first names only, please)

Hymn #508 Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire (verses 1 and 5)
(sung muted but together)

**Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.
O Christ, by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer you too have trod: Christ, teach us how to pray.**

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

Offering Invitation

Like a shepherd tending to those in their care,
God has offered us rest and renewal,
protection and mercy,
love and nourishment.

In response, we are invited to give a portion of our time, energy, gifts, and prayers
so that others in this world may experience the same.

Offering and Dedication **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

**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.**

Blessing and Benediction **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

**As we end this time for worship gathered together may we go with courage and
go with trust that the God who created us is also the One who will sustain us and
the One who will show us the way. Until we meet again, may we be filled with
curiosity, wonder, and openness to God's tender leading. Amen**