



New Covenant Presbyterian Church
April 25, 2021 10:00am Service



1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE
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The Worship of God

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing of Our Vision

Lay Leader:

Preparing to Meet God

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Prelude...



In 2013, Pope Francis addressed a homily to clergy, calling upon them to put their own skin and hearts on the line – to be “shepherds, with the `odor of the sheep,’ making it very real.” Like any number of Latin American and Hispanic theologians and pastoral agents, Francis favored a ministerial model predicated on accompaniment, a paradigm graphically articulated in this olfactory image. There is a sense here that to be one with the flock in this way, also makes shepherds indistinguishable in scent to predators, therefore putting themselves at risk, living with the fears and suffering of their communities.

Call to Worship

L: Shepherding God, be with us to guide us in this time of worship.

P: Help us to find rest and peace in your resurrection presence.

L: Prepare our hearts and minds with joyous praise.

P: Grant us mercy and grace, so that as we abide in your comforting love, we may blossom into new and hope-filled persons.

*Hymn of Praise # 187, red book *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

*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 bough us: we are yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us: we are yours.*

*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 your children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.*

*You have promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
You have mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and power to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.*

*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.*

Prayer of Confession

We wander around in life, O God, and we try to convince ourselves that it is a wonderful adventure. May we listen carefully with discerning ears, and help us to be open and truly receptive to your leading. Lord, we hope that your Holy Spirit will come into our lives and help us to respond as we move into greater paths of ministry and compassionate service. We pray, too, that this time of worship will renew our spirits and re-energize our lives, as we follow our risen Lord. And now, holy God, we turn to you in silent prayer to share our concerns and to seek your forgiveness.....Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

- L: Hear the Good News: Jesus, our Good Shepherd, laid down his life for us – his sheep.
P: ***He laid down his life for us that we might live as forgiven servants of God.***
L: Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel –
P: ***In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!***

Meeting God in the Word

Children's Message

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

1 John 3: 16-24

Loving in Truth and Action



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

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Second Lesson

John 10: 11-18

Jesus, Our Good Shepherd

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 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. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 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. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 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.'

Sermon

The Value of Life

Responding to the Word

*Hymn # 410, red book *God Is Calling Through the Whisper*

*God is calling through the whisper of the Spirit's deepest sighs,
Through the thrill of sudden beauties that can catch us by surprise.
Flash of lightning, crash of thunder; hush of stillness, rush of wonder:
God is calling – can you hear? God is calling – can you hear?*

*God is calling through the voices of our neighbors' urgent prayers,
Through their longing for redemption and for rescue from despair.
Place of hurt or face of needing; strident cry or silent pleading:
God is calling – can you hear? God is calling – can you hear?*

*God is calling through the music of sublime and human arts,
Through the hymns of earth and angels, and the carols of our hearts.
Lift of joy and gift of singing; days and nights our praises bringing:
God is calling – and we hear! God is calling – and we hear!*



*Gentle
Whispers*

EXPERIENCE GOD'S PROMISES IN LIFE'S STORMS.

*Litany of Faith

- L: The Lord is our Shepherd, but not ours alone, for the Lord has other sheep, not of this fold.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.
 L: The other folds include people from all Christian congregations, for the Lord is their Shepherd too.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.
 L: The other folds include people raised in the diverse cultures who have learned to worship differently than us.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.
 L: The other folds include people on the right and the left and in the middle, for the Lord is their Shepherd too.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.
 L: The other folds include the learned, the ignorant, and the innocent, for the Lord is their Shepherd too.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.
 L: The other folds include people of every race under the sun, for the Lord is their Shepherd too.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.
 L: The other folds include people from every nation on earth, for the Lord is their Shepherd too.
P: So, there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.

A: *Help us, O Lord, to put the commands of our Shepherd before the claims of our particular fold, that we might be faithful in our call to love others as we have been loved.*

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus:

*I cast all my cares upon you.
I lay all of my burdens down at your feet.
And anytime I don't know what to do,
I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

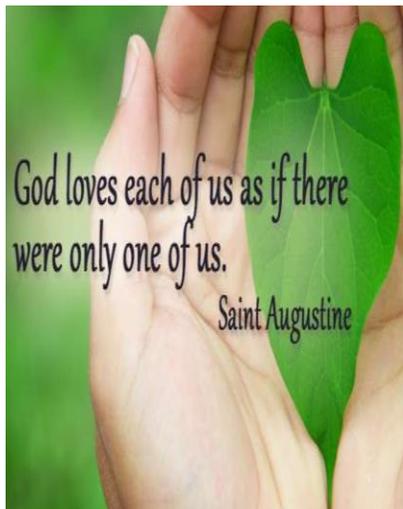
The Invitation *You are invited to place your offering in the basket in the back of the sanctuary.*

Prayer of Dedication *Lord of all, may these words, our actions and this offering signify our commitment to serve you with our lives. May we follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who was willing to sacrifice all that he had to serve you. Amen.*

Going Out to Serve God

* **Hymn # 547**, red book

Go, My Children, With My Blessing



*“God, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.”*

*“Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son’s story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.”*

*“Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me.
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit’s power filled you; here my tender comfort stilled you.
God, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.”*

* Blessing

L: God values each of us and created us for a purpose.

P: *May we use our lives discovering what that purpose is, and then carry it out, valuing each day and each person we meet as a precious Child of God.*

L: And may the blessings...

*Response

*He Is Lord
He is Lord, He is Lord!
He is risen from the dead and he is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.*