

Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year A

Color: White

Scriptures: [Scripture linked to NRSV at Oremus Bible Browser]

[Acts 2:42–47](#) (*The believers' common life worshiping and eating together*)

[Psalm 23](#) (*The Lord is my shepherd, leading, protecting, and feeding me*)

[1 Peter 2:19–25](#) (*We are called to Christ, the shepherd of our souls*)

[John 10:1–10](#) (*Christ the shepherd, the gate, through whom the sheep enter*)

Themes: God our Shepherd, Unity, Holy Spirit, Discipleship

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Hymn Suggestions link to Hymnary.org, a searchable resource with a wealth of information. The tunes listed here are the ones most commonly associated with the texts, and the biblical/thematic references suggest the hymn's association with the morning's scriptures or themes.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds (DENNIS).....	Acts
Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing (TRURO)	Acts, Easter
Great Is Thy Faithfulness (FAITHFULNESS).....	Acts, Psalms
He Leadeth Me (HE LEADETH ME).....	Psalms
I Come With Joy (DOVE OF PEACE)	Acts, Communion
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (ST. COLUMBA)	Psalms, 1 Peter
Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (Linstead).....	Acts, Communion
Lord of the Dance (SIMPLE GIFTS).....	John, Easter
The Lord's My Shepherd (BROTHER JAMES' AIR; CRIMOND).....	Psalms, John
My Shepherd Will Supply My Need (RESIGNATION)	Psalms
O Jesus, I Have Promised (ANGEL'S STORY; DAY OF REST; NYLAND)	1 Peter
One Bread, One Body (ONE BREAD, ONE BODY)	1 Peter
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us (BRADBURY)	Psalms
Shepherd Me, O God (SHEPHERD ME).....	Psalms
When In Our Music God Is Glorified (ENGELBERG)	Acts
Where Charity and Love Prevail (TWENTY-FOURTH; ST. PETER)	Acts
You Satisfy the Hungry Heart (FINEST WHEAT).....	John, Communion

ANTHEMS

E = Easy, M = Moderate, MD = Moderately Difficult

Draw Us In the Spirit's Tether - MActs, Comm.
Harold W. Friedell
© 1957, H.W. Gray, CMR2472
SATB, Organ

God Has Called Us - M..... 1 Peter
Robert Hobby
© 2006, MorningStar Music, 50-6067
SATB, Organ, opt. Brass (4), Timpani

Good Shepherd - M.....Psalms
Gwyneth Walker
© 2015, E.C. Schirmer, No. 8069
SAA, Organ (available in SATB)

He Leadeth Me - E Psalms, John
HE LEADETH ME/Gilbert M. Martin, arr.
© 1987, Hinshaw Music, HMC-907
SATB, opt. Solo, Piano

The Lord Is My Shepherd - MDPsalms
John Rutter (from *Requiem*)
© 1979, Oxford University, 9780193856295
SATB, Organ, Oboe

Loving Shepherd of Thy Sheep - E Psalms, John
Philip Ledger
© 1988, Roger Dean Publishing, HRD 244
SATB, Organ

My God Is So High - M..... John
African-American Spiritual/Moses Hogan, arr.
© 1995, Alliance Music, AMP 0190
SATB, a cappella

A Psalm Folksong - M.....Psalms
Edwin Penhorwood
© 1981, Hinshaw Music, HMC-534
SATB, Piano

Sheep May Safely Graze - M..... Psalms, John
J.S. Bach
© 1942, Galaxy Music Corp., No. 1.2297
SAB, Organ, opt. Flutes (available SATB, TTB and SSA)

We Shall Walk through the Valley - MEPsalms
African-American Spiritual/Clayton White, arr.
© 2021, Augsburg Fortress, 978-1-5064-7992-7
SATB, a cappella

-- Youth and Children --

The Lord Is My Shepherd - M.....Psalms
Allen Pote
© 1991, Choristers Guild, CGA 551
SATB, opt. voicing SAB, SAT, Piano

Do You Know Your Shepherd's Voice? - EPsalms
Suzanne Lord
© 1994, Choristers Guild, CGA 673
2-part, Piano

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (Prayers, Poems, Quotes & Liturgies)

*Good Shepherd, You have a wild and crazy
sheep in love with thorns and brambles. But
please don't get tired of looking for me!
I know You won't.*

*For You have found me. All I have to do is
stay found.*

— THOMAS MERTON, from *A Book of Hours*

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*Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.*

*We are Thine, do Thou befriend us,
Be the guardian of our way;
Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us,
Seek us when we go astray:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Hear, O hear us when we pray;*

*Thou hast promised to receive us,
Poor and sinful though we be;
Thou hast mercy to relieve us,
Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Early let us turn to Thee.*

*Early let us seek Thy favor,
Early let us do Thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior,
With Thy love our bosoms fill:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast loved us, love us still.*

— DOROTHY A. THRUPP
Hymns for the Young, 4th ed., London, 1836

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CALL TO WORSHIP

Gathered for worship, may our ears be attuned to the voice of the Good Shepherd.

God calls us by name; we know his voice. When I am lost, God will not leave me.

Gathered for worship, may our souls be restored.

God calls us his own and leads us to rest beside still waters.

Gathered for worship, may we embrace the gift of abundant life.

We come to worship God with glad and generous hearts.

— ANITA THOMPSON*

GATHERING PRAYER

Shepherd of our souls, we, your sheep, have gathered to worship you. We pray that the words we speak, the songs we sing, and the thoughts we think, will bring glory to your holy name. May we be open to receive from you what we need to live as disciples of Jesus Christ each day. In his name we pray. Amen.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Compassionate God, we love the picture the psalmist paints with Psalm 23. In our mind's eye we see spotless sheep grazing on the greenest of grasses, drinking from clear-as-glass waters, lovingly watched over by the wisest and kindest of shepherds. It's such a beautiful metaphor for what our lives could be. But we know that we are far from spotless sheep, for our image is marred by sin. And so, we offer to you our confession.

You have called us to love one another; we confess that we have harbored hatred. You have called us to minister to those in need; we confess that we have held tightly to our possessions, choosing not to share them. You have called us to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy; we confess that we have given priority to things other than corporate worship, fellowship, and the breaking of bread with our brothers and sisters. You have called us to follow where you lead; we confess that we are an easily distracted people who are drawn to paths that lead to dead ends.

Forgive us, Lord. Wash us clean. Set us firmly on your path. And by the power of your Holy Spirit, teach us how to live in ways that reflect the love of your Son, our Good Shepherd, Jesus the Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(Based upon 1 Peter 2:25)

Brothers and sisters, receive this good news:
Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that,
free from sins, we might live for righteousness.

By his wounds we have been healed. Thanks be to God.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

(Based on Acts 2:42-47)

Jesus, our Savior and Lord, in its beginnings, your church worked together to minister to the needs of its members. The smallest of offerings combined with the offerings of others provided the needed resources to accomplish this ministry. And because of their faithfulness, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Two thousand years later, we strive to follow their lead. May every gift, large or small, be used to minister to those in need. And may our offerings help spread the Good News to every person in every corner of this great wide world. Through your holy name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

(Based on 2 Corinthians 13:13)

As we depart from this place we go as
beloved sheep guided by a loving Shepherd.
Try not to be led astray.
Follow his lead to abundant life.
And now, may the grace
of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all. Amen.

Thanks to Anita Thompson for contributing this week's prayers and liturgies.

Warren Howell, editor