

Grace Devotion

Week of April 21, 2024

Pastor Fred Young

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The Gospel of John reminds us once again of how Jesus is the Good Shepherd. This text is as much about us as leaders, as it is about Christ as the shepherd. Now, more than ever, we are reminded that who the church strives to become cannot be separated from who Jesus is. All conversations regarding church identity need to begin with an understanding of Christ's life as its starting point. All members of a congregation should be recognized as pastors. When this title is reserved for clergy alone, Jesus' rich pastoral imagery for the community of all believers is lost.

The 23rd Psalm is one of the most popular prayers in the world. Most of us recognize the familiar words but what we don't often appreciate is the Psalm's value as a petition, because it doesn't fit the traditional model of what we've been taught a prayer should be. Listen to the psalmist's words from The Message translation. *Will you pray with me:*

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David

GOD, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to your word, you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.
Even when the way goes through
Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side.
Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.
You serve me a six-course dinner
right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head;
my cup brims with blessing.
Your beauty and love chase after me
every day of my life. I'm back home in the house of GOD
for the rest of my life.

The Message

We believe to pray means to ask God to do something for us or another. Psalm 23 is the recognition that everything we need has already been done; the writer of the Psalm is merely affirming that fact. Jesus never asked God to do anything to heal those he laid his hands on. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wasn't asking for anything; he was saying that he would do whatever was in God's heart.

What does it mean for the church to live according to Jesus' model of community envisioned in John's Gospel? What does a church who sees itself as Jesus' sheep look like? Who are some of our modern-day shepherds, guarding and guiding and leading us? In our time of transition, Grace has been given a gift to figure out the answers to these questions and much more. What role will you play in shepherding our church into a new mission and ministry?

PRAYER: God of Light and Love, inspire each of us to be a shepherd to all your children and lost sheep. Amen.

Blessings!
Pastor Fred



April 21, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes and Prelude

“What a Beautiful Day” (Ovokaitys/Harris)

~Soloist: Brody Rummel and Scott Fredericks

**Song: “Blessed Be Your Name” ~Matt Redman

** Call to Worship

Lector: As we worship together today, let us reflect on the calm assurance of the shepherd guiding his flock through green pastures and beside still waters.

Congregation: In the quiet moments, we find our spirit refreshed and our souls restored.

Lector: We are held by the Lord, sheltered from life’s storms and led along paths of peace.

Congregation: We find comfort and strength, even in the darkest valleys.

Lector: Let’s worship Him together, giving Him all our honor and praise.

Congregation: Let us walk together, knowing we are never alone, for He is our Shepherd.

** Opening Prayer: (pray silently or aloud)

Good and Gracious God, We gather today to hear Your word. Help us to see clearly in the middle of life’s chaos and find peace in your presence. Amen

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

** Hymn: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” #1

Joys and Concerns

Praying for Others

Lord’s Prayer

Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings

** Doxology #625

** Prayer of Dedication

Special Music: “Little Lamb, the Shepherd Loves You”
(Jordan/Page)

~Soloist Brody Rummel

**Nicene Creed*

Time for the Young at Heart

Hymn: “Shepherd of Love” #464

Scripture Readings: Psalm 23 (NRSV)

John 10:11-18 (The Message)

Message: “From Pasture to Purpose”

**Song: “My Lighthouse” ~Rend Collective

** Final Blessing

Please remain standing to sing “A Choral Benediction”

Postlude “Crown Him Lord of All” (Ellor)

*On the screen

** Please stand, if you are able.

Announcements

Church Financials

General pledge March 2024: \$7,960

YTD income: \$36,244.78

YTD expenses: \$52,459.98

YTD deficit: \$16,215.20

~Thanks to Scott Fredericks and Brody Rummel for their special music today!

Upcoming Events

- APRIL: UCC ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING (during the entire month of April)
- Bible Study Movie @1pm: Wednesday, April 24th
- Car Show: May 4th from 10am-2pm
- Monthly Movie @3pm: Friday, May 10th
- P-A-L April 18th

Guided by Grace



Grace United Church of Christ
100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

In case of inclement weather, please check Facebook or call the Prayer Line 717-634-8865

How to keep unity in the face of adversity

I appeal to you, dear brothers, and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.—1 Corinthians 1:10



A story is told of Tonto and the Lone Ranger riding through a canyon one afternoon. All of a sudden, both sides were filled with American Indian warriors on horses, dressed for battle and shouting loudly.

The Lone Ranger turned to Tonto and asked, *“What are we going to do?”*

Tonto replied, *“What do you mean, ‘we’, Kemosabe?”*

It’s amazing how when times get tough and we encounter adversity, one of the first things to be sacrificed is unity. And when we think about the challenges facing Christians today, many of these things are sadly dividing brothers and sisters in Christ when we need to be united more than ever.

Christian unity in the face of adversity, however, isn’t some unattainable concept. In fact, when we as believers in Christ maintain our commitment to the truth of Scripture and to the fellowship of the Spirit, unity just seems to happen.

When challenges come, we as the body of Christ must face them together. So stay committed to biblical truth. Reaffirm your devotion to one another in the Spirit. **When you make those things your priorities, adversity will bring you together instead of tearing you apart!**

Prayer Challenge

Pray and ask God to help you stay committed to biblical truth and fellowship of the Spirit so you stay unified with the body of Christ!

Questions for thought

What do you think is the main issue that causes division among Christians in the face of adversity?

Why do you think unity in the face of adversity is so vital for believers in Christ?

John 10:11-18



W	W	B	H	X	H	L	M	T	J	Z	N	E	V	A	G	G	D	A	E
D	S	V	H	E	I	N	X	W	R	A	S	F	G	H	S	I	E	E	U
B	R	C	H	Z	W	L	I	V	W	X	C	W	Y	R	T	P	V	L	T
M	H	Z	L	J	O	F	G	Q	B	F	Q	C	Y	Z	A	P	I	A	O
X	J	D	E	L	B	N	W	Y	R	Z	I	G	O	T	C	H	E	M	G
I	Y	R	I	A	I	U	P	T	I	T	N	N	Q	R	S	J	C	B	L
L	Z	X	E	L	S	F	F	L	O	W	N	X	E	O	D	S	E	Q	B
O	K	W	E	X	Q	A	E	A	A	U	F	O	N	V	Y	K	R	J	V
R	P	R	Z	I	T	D	F	G	Q	N	S	P	O	W	E	R	B	X	F
D	I	E	Y	H	E	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	W	M	N	T	D	U
H	L	A	E	E	S	O	G	I	F	X	C	U	Z	G	N	T	C	D	Y
P	D	R	H	H	G	G	H	L	L	C	I	G	Y	N	G	F	H	H	A
P	A	R	T	F	S	T	D	Y	L	B	O	G	Y	H	U	D	D	T	Q
R	D	F	N	S	R	S	C	M	N	P	V	N	X	A	A	H	L	S	V
A	O	Z	T	V	G	K	E	Z	X	K	T	I	Y	M	K	U	O	V	E
D	K	Y	H	E	S	J	P	E	D	U	N	X	V	G	R	G	F	Y	Q
K	U	E	A	K	L	C	B	D	K	N	R	O	D	W	G	I	K	P	F
T	T	L	F	A	X	U	Y	N	H	U	A	M	W	D	S	I	W	O	F
D	X	F	P	T	V	Z	S	M	G	G	U	E	C	S	M	O	L	P	K
U	H	H	D	X	V	I	A	J	E	O	C	I	H	T	D	B	S	X	Y

- ACCORD
- CHARGE
- FATHER
- FOLD
- HEED
- HIRELING
- KNOWS
- LIFE
- LORD
- POWER
- RECEIVED
- SHEEP
- SHEPHERD
- TAKE
- VOICE
- WOLF

The Lord
 is my
Shepherd
 I SHALL NOT WANT.
 HE MAKETH ME
 TO LIE DOWN IN
Green Pastures
 HE LEADETH ME
 BESIDES THE
Still Waters
 Psalm 23

S	V	T	H	G	K	Q	Q	Z	T	A	F	V	C	R	DEATH
R	E	R	X	S	E	T	M	Y	B	A	V	F	F	T	EVIL
T	I	R	O	C	E	U	P	U	S	I	S	E	X	U	FEAR
C	Y	G	O	D	N	E	Y	Z	M	N	X	J	K	V	GREEN
I	H	H	H	T	V	W	Y	G	F	D	B	L	E	A	PASTURES
Q	L	D	T	T	S	B	R	G	W	S	P	T	V	L	RESTORES
Z	L	P	Q	A	E	E	Y	X	E	O	B	V	I	L	RIGHTEOUSNESS
D	I	F	Q	Y	E	O	R	R	C	G	D	R	L	E	ROD
B	T	V	E	N	E	D	U	F	R	G	M	A	S	Y	SHADOW
K	S	T	A	F	F	T	B	S	U	Z	R	E	H	F	SOUL
D	N	O	F	O	S	F	K	R	N	T	Q	F	P	S	STAFF
N	P	Q	U	A	X	K	M	E	N	E	B	B	T	E	STILL
D	G	X	P	L	J	E	L	T	K	F	S	B	M	G	VALLEY
Z	L	U	H	M	A	N	N	A	F	U	K	S	G	F	WALK
U	K	J	H	D	N	S	P	W	W	E	B	L	P	H	WATERS