April 21, 2024 + 10:30 A.M. Fourth Sunday of Easter

We Join in Worship

If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.

PRELUDE The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Sharon Elery Rogers

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Adapted from Song of Songs 2)

Leader: Here, the winter is past; the rains have come and gone.

ALL: Blossoms have appeared in the land; the season of singing has arrived, and the sound of the

birds is heard in our land.

Leader: The green fruit is on the fig tree, and the grapevines in bloom are fragrant.

ALL: Let us rise up! Let us spend time with our Beloved, with our God who is Love!

*OPENING HYMN: "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" (387)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader:

The author of *1 John* writes, "Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. 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." Together let us confess the reasons that our hearts condemn us.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O God, we lift up our shared confession unto you, trusting in your tender love and care as our good shepherd. We confess that we have gone far astray as your sheep by not loving in deed and truth. We have denied you and turned away from you. We have ignored your voice and words. Instead, we have been following the voices of those who would mislead us. We have been led onto paths of fear, hatred, and division. We have built fences around our pastures in order to keep our resources to ourselves and to keep others away. And so we have chosen ignorance, disregarding the wisdom of our good shepherd. We have failed to feed your sheep. Forgive us for not following you. In the name of Jesus Christ, our gardener and shepherd, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE: No. 572 (unison)

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader:

Beloved, hear the good news! We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us!

ALL:

Our good shepherd laid down his life for us, and now he is risen! Hallelujah!

Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI: No. 579 (unison)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (from *The Confession of 1967*)

God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the Scriptures describe in various ways. It is called the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement by a priest; again it is ransom of a slave, payment of debt, vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty, and victory over the powers of evil. These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the depths of God's love for humanity. They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of God's reconciling work. Amen.

We Hear God's Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Almighty God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the light of eternity. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of comfort and challenge in the reading of the scriptures. In the name of Jesus Christ, the gardener of new life, we pray. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON

Psalm 23

EPISTLE LESSON

1 John 3:16-24

GOSPEL LESSON

John 21:1-19

SERMON

Cups Overflowing with the Water of New Life

MUSICAL MEDITATION

You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore

Cesáreo Gabaraín

We Respond in Faith

OFFICER INSTALLATION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader:

The good shepherd is always looking out for us, leading us beside still waters. Let us give our pledges, tithes, and offerings so that we can keep watering the garden of new life. If you did not do so as you entered, please place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Let us reflect on stewardship as we hear today's offertory.

OFFERTORY

Your Love, O God, Has Called Us Here

M. Lee Suitor

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God, above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

O God, like a shepherd you lead us. We dedicate these gifts to you and to your kingdom. Guide us as we seek to serve your flock. In the name of Jesus Christ, our gardener and shepherd, we pray. Amen.

We Go into the World

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Where He Leads Me

John S. Norris

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

Life of the Church

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 4/21: Adult Study – 9:00 AM

Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM

Fellowship Hosts: Faith Development

MONDAY 4/22: GA -6:30 PM

Al-Anon - 7:00 PM

TUESDAY 4//23: Prayer Shawl – 1:00 PM

WEDNESDAY 4/24: "Bring Your Own Bible" Bible Study 7-8 PM (Zoom)

GA - 7:00 PM

THURSDAY 4/25: Choir – 7:00 PM

SATURDAY 4/27: Sackurday – 12:00 PM

^{*} **CLOSING HYMN:** "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" (172)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MINISTRY OF MISSION'S 2024 FLOWER VOUCHER SALE HAS BEGUN! The Ministry of Mission is once again selling vouchers for Zandstra's Greenhouse located at 10202 Kennedy Avenue, Highland, Indiana. The vouchers are \$17.00 and are worth \$17.00 at Zandstra's, just like cash. You can purchase anything from flowers, to veggie plants, to potting soil, to flower pots, etc. If you are interested in purchasing vouchers, please see any Mission Member or contact Tracy Oprea @ (219) 616-7181.
- <u>SANCTUARY LABYRINTH</u> Take some time before or after worship or during office hours on weekdays to prayerfully walk the labyrinth lovingly created for our sanctuary!
- <u>THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD CLASS</u> meets on Sunday mornings at 9 am in the upstairs meeting room. We are using "The Difficult Words of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings" by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine. Come explore and learn with us! Contact John Toren or Heather Casiano with any questions.
- <u>BYOB</u> The Wednesday evening "BYOB" (Bring Your Own Bible) discussion group will begin meeting again on April 10, and will meet weekly through May 15. BYOB meets online on Zoom from 7-8 pm. We are currently focusing on the churchwide theme "New Life in God's Garden" and exploring scripture passages related to gardens and gardening. Each week is independent of the other weeks, so you can join in whenever you're available without missing a lesson. The link to join the Zoom meetings is emailed out weekly. If you are not on the email list and would like to be, contact Kristen in the church office or Heather Casiano.
- SPRING READ-A-LONG AND BOOK DISCUSSION Faith Development is sponsoring a spring read-a-long on a timely subject for this year. The book is "Thou Shalt Not Be Jerk: A Christian's Guide to Engaging Politics" by Eugene Cho. For more information about the book and author, see the article in the April Larger View. You're encouraged to start reading the book this month. This book, originally published in 2020, and our discussions, will not endorse any candidates or political parties, so no matter where you may find yourself on the vast spectrum of thought, there is room for all voices. There will be several ways to engage in discussion:
 - * A private Facebook group for this read-a-long available starting on April 16
 - * A Zoom discussion on the first half of the book on May 22 at 6:30 pm
 - * An in-person discussion of last half of the book on June 12 at 6:30 pm

We have 5 copies of this book at the church that can be checked out to read. Please sign the check-out sheet when you take a book, and sign it back in when you are finished so more people may enjoy the book. "Thou Shalt Not Be A Jerk" is also available in paperback and as an e-book (Kindle) through many retailers and bookstores.

- FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA! If you don't already follow First Presbyterian Church of Highland on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so and sharing our posts with your friends! Find us @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- <u>JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP AFTER WORSHIP</u> Every Sunday after worship we have delicious snacks, coffee, lemonade, and conversation. Join us for this vital part of our life together!
- <u>INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?</u> You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

• <u>BLESSING BOX</u> OUR BLESSING BOX IS LOW ON FUNDS AND SUPPLIES. DONATIONS ARE WELCOME! Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!

- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex to help the church's food pantry. We'd love to have you take a bag home, place some non-perishable food items in the bag, and bring it back to the church to help keep our pantry stocked!
- BIN OF HUGS Bring in clean, gently used stuffed animals for distribution to migrant families with young children who need the joy of loving welcome!

Prayer List

Anthony

George Nelson

Brady Vanes George Griner

Guy Hendricks

Bill and Anettia Holmes

Daniel Litwicki David Markley

Pat and David Kingen

Diana and Ray Mendoza

Janet Orem Jeanne Nestor

Cindy Waltz and Sister

Yvonne Suroviak

Wendy

Georgette Sknerski

Jakob Holden

Denise Matthys Steve & Melinda

Gary Studer

Jan Oprea

Janet Vargo

Ric Jaeggi

Florance Cody

Josephine Kim

Carol Figley

Kathy & Chuck Pumnea

Nick

Laura Buono Domsic

The Windstrups

Ruth Dekker

Rick Parker

Gary Everhart

Gale Osterby

Bonnie Kern

Collin & Kathy Stein

Peter

Tim

Barbara Morton Caroline Studer

Cary & Jennifer Pearson

Holly Letnich

Jaden Mendez

Frank Falzone

Doug & Sue Matthews

Robert Urich

Richard Simmons

Janet Terpstra

Glen Nahler

Tammy

Tom

Jana Tolley

Larry & Bonnie Perryman

Virginia Marshall

Delta Rose

Paulina Martinez

Winnie Owen

Charity Lynn

Chestine

Shannon

David Hamblin

Judy

Breeanne

Joe Petersen

Susan Agbor

Mom Bechtler

A Close Friend

Gloria

John Shields

John Miramontes

Colton Bobonick

Cletus

Mary

Victor

Mary Ellen Edeus

Psalm 23

- 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.

1 John 3:16-24

- ¹⁶ We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters. 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?
- ¹⁸ Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. ¹⁹ And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us, for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God, ²² and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him
- ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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.

John 21:1-17

- 21 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.
- ⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.
- ⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them, and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.
- 15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Cups Overflowing with the Water of New Life

Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 21:1-19

Welcome back to God's garden, loved ones! We have prepared the soil and planted the seeds. Now it is time to add some water! On this Good Shepherd Sunday, we are going to be led beside the waters of new life. And our cups shall overflow! Today we find the disciples in a very familiar place, back upon the waters of the Sea of Galilee. This time it all seems very surreal. It is as though the last three years never happened, as though it were all a dream. For, the disciples are right back where it all started doing exactly what they had been doing before they met Jesus. They are doing the same work as before at the same time as before, fishing by night. And, it should be noted, they are having the same success as before—catching nothing! Surreal indeed! It makes me scratch my head and wonder what exactly is going on here.

On Resurrection Sunday we spoke of the beautiful symmetry of the story of God's love for us in the first Creation and in the New Creation—in the Garden of Eden and in the garden on Golgotha. This symmetry creates a circle of sorts, showing us the completion, the wholeness, the *shalom* of God's plan. And here we are seeing another striking example of that beautiful symmetry at work—upon the Sea of Galilee for the very beginning of Jesus public ministry and upon the Sea of Galilee for the beginning of something new after Jesus' resurrection. Undoubtedly we are being called back to the disciples' very first encounter with Jesus, which is in many ways its own creation story—the creation of the movement of the followers of the Way, the creation of

the Kingdom, the creation of the flock. We are being called to recall who exactly these disciples were and what life was like in the before time.

In years past I have considered this through a somewhat unflattering lens. I have reflected on the possibility that the disciples were giving up after Jesus' crucifixion and death, that they were somehow to traumatized by it all to be able to trust and believe in the resurrection even after Jesus' multiple appearance to them. In this view, they simply went back to their previous lives because they no longer had the wherewithal or passion to imagine the transformed life. This time around, though, I am considering a different perspective. Perhaps the disciples were doing their own dramatic exercise. Perhaps they were intentionally creating this full-circle moment, this reenactment, as a way to reenergize, to reengage, reemerge. Perhaps this was an embodied act of re-creation! Perhaps this was an embodied act of resurrection!

In this view, the seeds of new life had actually begun to germinate and grow in the fertile soil created for the disciples back in the Upper Room. In this view, the disciples went back to where it all began in order to mark a new beginning, in order to enact new creation with a reenactment. They understood that the resurrection changed everything, that now, more than ever, was time to plant and water the seeds of new life and transformation, to expand the garden of God's love as far and wide as possible. They also understood that they would have to be the ones responsible for doing so, that they would have to pick up the mantle of their Lord. For, he was going to ascend to heaven soon to prepare the way for the ultimate completion of Creation, with the Tree of Life in the garden at the meeting of heaven and earth. Jesus had his work that he needed to do, and the disciples had their work that they needed to do.

In order for the disciples to be ready, though, they had some healing to do. And this circling back to the beginning was the staging ground (or should I say staging water?) for that healing. They needed to heal from the mistakes they had made—from their abandonments and betrayals and denials. They needed to heal from their grief and despair. They needed some embodied therapy that would both catalyze that healing and catalyze new creation.

So, there they went, back to the Sea of Galilee to create that surreal scene of so much familiarity. While they were back out on that boat, I am sure that they were remembering quite a lot of hard things—empty nets, raging storms, and faltering footsteps upon the water turning into sinking footsteps—all of which also carried rich metaphorical meaning for the realities of their lives over the past week or so. They let down the nets, and once again those nets came back empty. And so the stage was fully set.

And Jesus, of course, was there for it. He was all in! I have to wonder if it was his idea to begin with, if he was writer, producer, and director all in one without their knowing it. It certainly makes sense to me that the good shepherd would somehow lead his sheep to these waters of new life in order to enact their healing. After all, he knew them deeply! I imagine him standing there on that shore with a big grin on his face, doing his own remembering, reflecting on the incredible journey that he had had with this motley crew of fisher people over the past few years. I am sure that he saw things a bit differently than they did, though. In those empty nets, I am sure that he saw dogged perseverance. In those mighty storms, I am sure that he saw skilled sailors navigating rough waters. In those faltering footsteps, I am sure that he saw the beginnings of faith. Oh yes, I can see the big grin on his face back out on that shore!

And then the full circle healing began. "Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'" And so they knew that their shepherd would always provide for their needs, even in this new stage of things. Simon Peter responded by putting on his clothes and jumping out onto the water. Those feet faltered no more as he raced to the shore. And so he knew that his faith had been made whole. Oh, and it gets better and better!

There, waiting for them upon the shore was a breakfast of bread and fish, right where they themselves had participated in the miracle of feeding 5,000 with bread and fish when they thought they had nowhere near enough. And so they were reminded that they, too, had wonder-working power. Every step of the way, I can

imagine that healing filling them up. I can picture delight lighting up their faces—the delight of both remembrance and of new memories being made.

And then our good shepherd turns to the sheep who needed the most healing, the one who had run across the water to meet him. "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He replies, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus says to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he says to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He replies, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus says to him, "Tend my sheep." Then he says to him a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter feels hurt because Jesus feels the need to ask him a full three times, "Do you love me?" But this is his moment of redemption! Three times he had denied him, and now three times Jesus allows him to make up for it with proclamations of love. And so Simon Peter says, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus says to him, "Feed my sheep." Symmetry, healing, wholeness, *shalom*. The healing is complete.

With this, the good shepherd knows that his sheep are ready to become shepherds themselves. With this, the sheep themselves know that they are ready for this transformation. They will be prepared when the time comes for him to ascend. There by the Sea of Galilee, the lowest altitude freshwater lake in the world, their cups overflow with the water of new life, and they are ready! They will keep going, leading others to the water. They will do so at great risk, just as their shepherd had done. Some will even lay down their own lives for the sake of love, as our reading from *1 John* urges us to do. Peter famously will do so on a cross, as prophesied by Jesus at the end of the story.

Oh yes, there was something in that water! Symmetry, healing, wholeness, *shalom*. Loved ones, hear the good news! The good shepherd is leading us beside those waters still. It is up to us to decide if we are ready to risk stepping out upon those waters and getting our feet wet. For we, too, can have our full circle moments. We can remember our baptisms, where it all began. We can reenact that decision we made or that was made for us through the tender love of our caregivers. And so we can reenergize, reengage, and reemerge! We can experience re-creation! We can embody resurrection! If we truly open ourselves up to following the good shepherd, then we open ourselves up to the possibility of new life. Our cups overflow with goodness and mercy, and we are freed from all the guilt and despair and fear that plague us. We are empowered to become shepherds who help to lead others to water. We are empowered to embody resurrection by participating in the creation of a world in which all can experience the fullness of life!

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

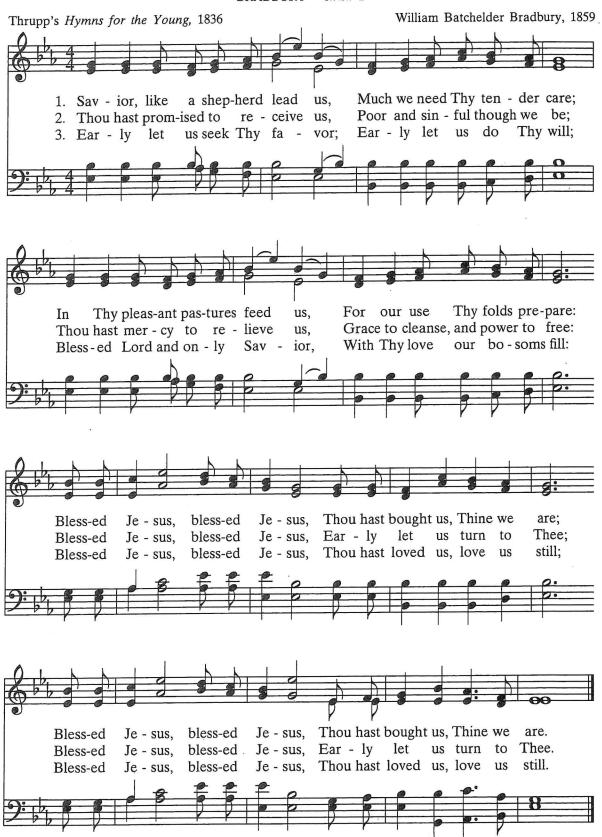
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Amen!

BRADBURY 8.7.8.7 D



Alternate tune: SICILIAN MARINERS, 538

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

RESIGNATION CMD

