

AUGUST 30, 2020
ONLINE SERVICE
SUNDAY 09:30 a.m.



MY SHEPHERD

PSALM 23

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



Announcement

Aug 30 (Sun) HOME Worship Service

Sep 6 (Sun) HOME Worship Service *with Holy Communion*
Communion Offering for UM Communities

Church Re-Open! (Outdoor Service)

UG Time / Place: Sep 13 (Sun) 9:30 am @ UG Parking Lot

WG Time / Place: Oct 18 (Sun) 11:30 am @ WG Parking Lot

****Church Reopening Plan is subject to change.**

Sep 4 (Fri) Carrie & Jody Weiner's Birthday

Sep 6 (Sun) Kadence MacNeill's Birthday

Opening Hymn (UMH 128)

He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought (<https://youtu.be/lxmjtqAHX9g>)

Call to Worship

Give thanks to the Lord!

We will sing God's praises!

Seek the Lord and God's strength.

We continually seek God's presence in our lives.

Remember all the wonderful things that God has done.

Praise the Lord! AMEN.

Hymn of Praise (UMH 140)

Great Is Thy Faithfulness (<https://youtu.be/9tEBssvWThc>)

Morning Prayer

God of love and mercy, be with us this day. We have faltered in our service to you. We judge before we listen; we condemn before we make any attempt to understand. Our lives are in turmoil and we confess that we have turned away from you. It is fear and anger that too often surrounds us and our actions become based on those fears and anger. Slow us down, Lord. Give us hearts overflowing with grace and compassion. Help us to mirror Jesus who loved and healed others. Remind us that we are called to be a home to strangers; to quench thirst and to give nourishment; to welcome and bring words of hope. Forgive us when we have forgotten these things. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

Psalter Reading

Psalm 139 _ UMH 854

Scripture Reading

Psalm 23

Message

"MY SHEPHERD"

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/thegroveschurches/>)

Website (<https://groveschurches.org/>)

Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed _ UMH 881

Offering

*Offering (CHECK) by mail to:

UGUMC _ Krissi Reed (50 Burt St, Bridgeton NJ 08302)

WGUMC _ Cheryl Fox (1940 Coles Mill Rd, Franklinville NJ 08322)

**Offering by ONLINE:

<http://www.gnjumc.org/onlinegiving> Or <http://groveschurches.org>

UGUMC Church number: 9068 (Norma)

WGUMC Church number: 9071 (Pittsgrove)

Closing Song

Our God by Chris Tomlin (<https://youtu.be/R-JZ9Ksl7YI>)

Benediction

[PRAYER REQUEST] _ Let us pray together.

1. For all the congregation of Groves Ministries.

Lord, surround us with Your divine hedge of protection. Encompass us round about with Your strength and Your might. May You shelter us, that those who love Your name may exult in You.

2. For our nation and the world.

Lord, we pray for our nation and the whole world during the pandemic. Grant Your peace, Your comfort, and Your healing. Be with us, Lord. Amen.

MY SHEPHERD

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Psalm 23

Groves
Ministries

Psalm 23 was written by David. Yes, David was a king, but he remembered his beginnings as a shepherd. In this psalm, he recounts God's goodness, faithfulness, and kindness to him throughout his days. "Probably the most important single word in this psalm is the little word my. You can know that the Lord is the Shepherd—the only One in the universe who can fully meet your need. It is only when you have come to place your confidence in Him personally that you can sing with David of old, 'The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want'". Everything that follows in the psalm hinges on this statement: God is your shepherd. Just as the course of David's life changed when God chose him through Samuel's anointing (1 Samuel 16:1–13), so the path of the believer's life changes when God becomes our shepherd. Through the salvation of the Lord, we find ourselves the great beneficiaries of God's kindness, care, sustenance, and provision.

Psalm 23 is often used during times of trial or sadness because for the believer it can bring comfort. To know the shepherd does not mean that we will live lives without hardship or grief, but it does mean that God does not abandon us. He will sustain us. He may not provide all our wants, but he will provide what we need. Through him we have reconciliation with God and the restoration of all things—many in this life and all in the life to come. Even when it feels like we are in want, we can trust in the Good Shepherd to see us through.

Make no mistake that David knew what it was to be a shepherd and he knew what it was to be a sheep. Sheep have a reputation for being notoriously foolish, vulnerable, and unintelligent. Urban Dictionary says the slang use of the term sheep refers to "a waste of flesh and brain cells." Ouch! Watch any clip of America's Funniest Home Videos and you might be convinced that humanity is quite ridiculous! Like sheep, we need something, someone, outside of ourselves to help us and guide us. The flip side to that is that recent studies have shown that "sheep are actually surprisingly intelligent, with impressive memory and recognition skills. They build friendships, stick up for one another in fights, and feel sad when their friends are sent to slaughter" (Harriet Constable, "Sheep Are Not Stupid, and They Are Not Helpless Either," BBC, April 19, 2017). This all seems to track with the humanity we know. We are keen, clever, resourceful, and relational—and we are definitely in need of direction, sometimes incapable of making good choices. We can do many things all by ourselves in our own strength, but we are also helpless to overcome sin, to find sustained hope or joy, or to gain eternal life apart from our shepherd's intervention.

The choice for the believer is whether or not to willingly become the shepherd's sheep. Will we allow ourselves to give up control and follow the wisdom of a good and caring shepherd who can meet our every need? Can we truthfully say, "The LORD is my shepherd"? We do not always know what life will include when we submit ourselves to God's authority. When Samuel showed up at David's house, how could David have known all that was to come? Did David know that he would kill a giant? Did he know that he would be on the run because Saul wanted to kill him? Did he anticipate becoming a murderer? Did he know he would fail, yet be restored? Did he know that he would lose children to death and to rebellion? Of course he didn't! Yet, through it all, David would remain an imperfect pillar of the faith and a man after God's heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). Like David, we will face hardship, and we will enjoy triumph. This only emphasizes the truth of Psalm 23: that everything we are, everything we have, and everything we need is found in the Lord. Our Great Shepherd provides for us, restores us, leads us, protects us, comforts us, and sustains us, now and for eternity, as we dwell in his love and care. We don't know what will happen, but like David, we can reflect and know we are in the care of the Good Shepherd, and that can give us peace to face the future, regardless of our circumstances.

[Some questions to think about...]

- What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
- Is it hard for you to ask for help? Why or why not? How does this affect your view of God as your shepherd?
- When you are weary, what "green pastures" and "still waters" does God lead you to for restoration?
- What is a practical way you can make time for rest or restorative activity this week?