

EASTER 4B

April 25, 2021

VIDEO – IN THIS NEWBORN LIGHT

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations of personal hygiene products for Mary's Place – Refugee Resettlement Center

Donations of breakfast items – granola bars, fruit for Cameron Community Ministries distance-learning educational support program for children in the surrounding community of Rochester.

Donations of sneakers – children's sizes 8-13 – for the children at Friendship Children's Center.

Monetary donations for all of these causes are also being accepted.

***CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 4)**

We gather in the presence of our God:

where grieving people and children with skinned knees have their tears wiped away.

We gather as the little children of God:

to worship the One who provides what we need, not what we want.

We gather around the table of God:

to taste the goodness of God, to drink deeply from God's mercy.

SCRIPTURE – PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside the still waters, he restores my soul.

He leads me in 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 my enemies, Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Let us come to God, trusting the tireless mercy which ever awaits us.

Let us pray responsively.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)**

God our most holy Friend, we come before you as wanderers who need to come home to familiar ground and saving grace. Lord have mercy. LORD HAVE MERCY.

We come compromised from seeking a living in a ruthless world, in need of facing our failures and regaining our bearings. Christ have mercy. CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

We come seeking that shepherd-love that gave Mary Magdalene back her sanity, Zacchaeus back his self-respect, Peter a second chance, and Paul a totally new life. Lord have mercy. LORD HAVE MERCY.

And now, Holy Friend, lift us out of our preoccupation with our own needs.

ALLOW US TO TRUST YOU WITH ALL THAT IS PAST AND TO COMMIT TO ALL THAT IS TO COME.

Make us joyful in all the goodness we have received from your hands.

AND LET US SEEK THE SAME GRACE AND JOY FOR THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK BESIDE US.

Create in us a new gratitude for all people who are loving, true and beautiful.

AWAKEN IN US A LONGING FOR THE QUALITIES OF CHRIST JESUS.

Make us aware of the mighty crowd of people surrounding us, both past and present, and all those who are yet to come, who trust, love and worship you, world without end.

THROUGH CHRIST JESUS OUR SAVIOR.

a time for silent prayer

SCRIPTURE - I JOHN 3:16-24

¹⁶We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How 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? ¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And 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. ²⁴All 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.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Family of the Most High God, by the priceless mercy of Christ we are a new people, forgiven and restored to declare the wonderful works of the God who brings us out of darkness into light.

THANKS BE TO GOD!

***PASSING THE PEACE** (Responsive) (based on James 3)

Jesus came to bring peace among us.

Let us sow the seeds for peace in our world

by sharing the peace of Christ

with one another, stranger and friend alike.

Peace be with you.

And also with you.

(Please offer a sign to one another of Christ's peace.)

HYMN #172 "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need"

My Shepherd will supply my need; Jehovah is His name:

In pastures fresh me makes me feed, Beside the living stream.

He brings my wandering spirit back, When I forsake His ways;

And leads me, for His mercy's sake In paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death Your presence is my stay;

One word of Your supporting breath Drives all my fears away.

Your hand, in sight of all my foes, Does still my table spread;

My cup with blessings overflows, Your oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God Attend me all my days;

O may Your House be my abode, And all my work be praise.

There would I find a settled rest, While others go and come;

No more a stranger, or a guest, But like a child at home.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

God of the Word, open our hearts and minds, and give us the courage to hear your Word as we read the words of Scripture today. By the power of your Spirit, illuminate our paths. Amen.

SCRIPTURE – JOHN 10:11-18

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The 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. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I 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.

¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No 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.”

MESSAGE “The Good Shepherd”

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from *A Brief Statement of Faith*)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

HYMN #430 “Come Sing, O Church in Joy”

Come sing, O church in joy! Come join, O church, in song!
For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long!
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Long years have come and gone, And still God reigns supreme,
Empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Let courage be our friend, Let wisdom be our guide,
As we in mission magnify the Crucified!
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Come sing, O church, in Joy! Come join, O church in song!
For Christ the Lord has triumphed o’er the ages long!
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

We offer our prayers through Christ, who is risen from the dead, and through the Spirit gives life to our mortal lives.

Keep us alert, loving God, to the extensive needs of those around us, and guide us in how to best employ our time and gifts to express your love for them.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

While we eat well, some scavenge for scraps. While we drink purified water on tap, some plod a long way to obtain muddy water to carry back to their families.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

While our children go to school, or at home enjoy leisure, games and toys, there are other children who toil daily making bricks or carpets, or are sold into child prostitution.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

While we go to bed in comfortable surroundings and sleep peacefully, some sleep under bridges, shelter in shop doorways or cemeteries, and have old newspapers for their blankets.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

While we have a faith to sustain us, much love to nurture us, and a hope to draw us forward in confidence, there are many without faith, love or hope, and some who are planning suicide.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

While we have a land that, no matter where we travel, we can always call our home, there are a multitude of refugees made homeless by racism, war, or natural disaster.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

While we have physicians to treat even our minor ailments, and well-equipped hospitals for more serious ailments, there are millions without even the most basic medical services.

God our holy Friend, save your people. **GOOD SHEPHERD, GUIDE AND INSPIRE US.**

God of justice and compassion, we do not understand all the reasons why some must suffer while others live a comfortable existence, but we do know that you are on the side of health and happiness. Keep us on your side, that in all our affairs, our actions and words may mirror your generous mercy, truth and peace.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying . . .
Our Father. . ."

THE LORD'S PRAYER (sins)

CHARGE & BENEDICTION (Colossians 3:12-14)

As God's own, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness and patience,
forgiving one another as the Lord had forgiven you,
and crown all these things with love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you now and abide with you always. Amen.**

CHIMES & POSTLUDE