

**He Lives to be My Good Shepherd**

Fourth Sunday of Easter

# **BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** | York, Nebraska

*April 30, 2023*

## **SERIES THEME: HE LIVES!**

Life is full of either/or moments where you face an unavoidable choice between two alternatives. Some of those moments are relatively insignificant. Either I have the chicken, or I have the fish. Other times, they shape the course of your life. Either I accept this new job offer, or I keep my current job for the remainder of my career. Either I accept his marriage proposal, or.... Some either/or moments are bigger than others. Here is the biggest either/or of them all. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. One might ask, "How does that either/or affect me?" Because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and Savior from sin. He said the proof is that he would rise from the dead. "The Son of Man must suffer many things ... be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). Thus, if Jesus remains dead, he is both failure and fraud. However, if Jesus rose from the dead, he proves he is who he claimed to be—the Messiah. And he did what he came to do—save us. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. That means, either Jesus is a complete waste of your time, or he is your only hope for salvation. If Jesus is still dead, it is completely logical that you should want nothing to do with him. If Jesus rose, it is only logical that he becomes the center and greatest priority of your life. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. This season of Easter is a 50-day-long celebration of the fact that the Holy Spirit has answered that either/or for us. We believe this life-changing truth. Christ is risen! He lives! Throughout this season, we explore what that means.

## **THEME OF THE DAY: HE LIVES TO BE MY GOOD SHEPHERD**

Every culture has the concept of an ideal citizen, someone who typifies its values. For much of the United States' history, the ideal citizen was the American farmer: hardworking, innovative, vital to our collective well-being. Even some of our first presidents were farmers. For the people of Israel, the farmer wasn't their ideal citizen. It was the shepherd. Sheep were an invaluable source of clothing and food. But they were hard to keep in the Judean countryside. Its sparse grasslands are intermixed with desert. For sheep, food is sparse, but predators are plenteous. The survival of sheep was dependent on their shepherd. There he is. Weather-beaten. Sleepless. Armed. In the dusk, he scans the land, counting his sheep, making sure they are all accounted for, every one of them on his heart. You see why Jesus chose the shepherd to illustrate how he cares for us. He feeds us with his Word. He protects us from that roaring lion, Satan. Jesus is leading us into the green pasture of eternal life. For centuries, the Church has observed this Fourth Sunday of Easter to celebrate that he lives to be our Good Shepherd.

**Worship Leader**

Pastor Justin Wilkens

**Organist/Pianist**

Timothy Richert

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)**

### **Hymn: 471 Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds**

*sts. 1–2*

*Stand*

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **Confession**

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

**Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Almighty and merciful Father,**

**we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.**

**We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.**

**We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.**

**We have done those things that we should not have done,**

**and we have not done those things that we should have done.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,**

**according to your promises in Christ Jesus.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Lord, Have Mercy**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

### Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



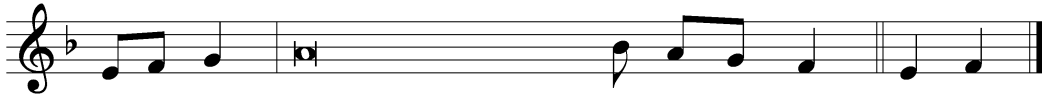
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Good Shepherd who laid down your life for the sheep. Lead us now to the still waters of your life-giving Word that we may abide in your Father's house forevermore; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Be seated*

## First Reading

*Acts 2:42–47*

*The early church was marked by devotion to apostolic teaching and genuine love for one another. And the Good Shepherd's flock grew.*

## The Fellowship of the Believers

<sup>42</sup>They continued to hold firmly to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers. <sup>43</sup>Awe came over every soul, and many wonders and signs were

being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They were selling their possessions and property and were distributing the proceeds according to what anyone needed.

<sup>46</sup> Day after day, with one mind, they were devoted to meeting in the temple area, as they continued to break bread in their homes. They shared their food with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> as they continued praising God and being viewed favorably by all the people. Day after day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Second Reading**

*1 Peter 2:19–25*

*St. Peter calls us to follow our Shepherd and Overseer, even if it means that we suffer for doing good.*

<sup>19</sup> For this is favorable: if a person endures sorrows while suffering unjustly because he is conscious of God. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it to you if you receive a beating for sinning and patiently endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is favorable with God.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed, you were called to do this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you would follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He did not commit a sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was insulted, he did not insult in return. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself carried our sins in his body on the tree so that we would be dead to sins and alive to righteousness. By his wounds you were healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but you are now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

## Gospel Acclamation

John 10:14



### Refrain



### Tone



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## Gospel

John 10:1-10

*Jesus is not only our Good Shepherd. He is the gate through which we enter into the green pastures of salvation.*

### The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

<sup>1</sup> "Amen, Amen, I tell you: Anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the door, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The doorkeeper opens the door for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own sheep, he walks ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> They will never follow a stranger, but will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this illustration in speaking to the people, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

<sup>7</sup> So Jesus said again, "Amen, Amen, I tell you: I am the door for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

<sup>10</sup> "A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*Be seated*

## Hymn of the Day: 552 The King of Love My Shepherd Is

### Sermon

*Stand*

### Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.**

**He suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who in unity with the Father and the Son  
is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.**



**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*Be seated*

## **Prayer of the Church**

*Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.*

Loving Shepherd of the sheep, fill us with contentment and confidence during this season as we celebrate your Easter victory. You laid down your life for the sheep and then rose again to assure us that you give us eternal life.

**Good Shepherd, save us.**

Strengthen our faith to follow where you lead, to the green pastures of your Word, the quiet waters of our baptism, and the gracious table of your body and blood where our cup overflows with your forgiving love. Guide us to find in you the gate that leads to safety and good pastures.

**Good Shepherd, lead us.**

Guard and protect us from those who want to lead us astray and snatch us out of your hand. Give us courage to fight against the devil and wisdom to recognize false teachers. Lead us to honor and follow those you have called to shepherd your flock, the Church.

**Good Shepherd, guide us.**

Let your rod and your staff comfort us and all your sheep in times of sickness and sadness and especially when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. [We include in our prayers today... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] May we find in your redemption and your Father's resolve the unbreakable promise that we will dwell in your house forever.

**Good Shepherd, console us.**

Move us to reach out to sheep who are not yet a part of our sheep pen but whom you have claimed as your own. Give us your passion to search for the sheep who are lost and lead us to rejoice when they have been found.

**Good Shepherd, inspire us.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

We thank you for all the blessings we have gained from your goodness: family and friends, wealth and health, work and leisure. Give us wisdom to long for and cherish your more precious gifts, your Word and sacraments, so that your goodness and love may follow us all the days of our life.

**Good Shepherd, hear us. Amen.**

## **Offering**

**Offering Hymn: 625 Splendor and Honor**

*sts. 1–2*

## **THE SACRAMENT**

*Stand*

### **Preface**

*CW 165*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who by his willing sacrifice on the cross took away the sins of the world and by his glorious resurrection restored everlasting life. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

## Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167

The musical score is written on five staves in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en-ly hosts:  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san - na, ho -  
san - na, ho-san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he,  
bless-ed is he, bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Ho-san - na, ho-san - na, ho-san - na in the high - est.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## 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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

## O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169



O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;

have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,  
 you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.  
 O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
 grant us your peace. A - - - men.

*Be seated*

## Distribution

**Close Communion** We ask that only those who have previously spoken to our pastor or are members in good standing of this or another WELS or ELS congregation come to Holy Communion today. Our practice of Close Communion (which has been the practice of the Christian Church throughout the ages) is in no way trying to judge anyone's faith. What we are trying to do is follow the Bible's clear teaching (1 Corinthians 11) to first study God's Word together. As we do so, we can share with/review with you what the Lord's Supper is all about. You, then, also have an opportunity to examine what we believe and teach before you come to the Lord's Supper and make a public profession that you agree with what we teach.

## Distribution Hymn: 677 The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

**Amen.**

### **Hymn: 793 Jesus, Tender Shepherd, Hear Me**



## **NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Today:** 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

**Sunday:** 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship

### **Bethel Voters Meeting April 23rd**

The next voters meeting will take place on April 23rd following our worship service.

### **New Church Directory**

Please find a time following a worship service or schedule a day to have Beverly Bornschlegl take your picture to go into the upcoming church directory. We would like to have all pictures taken by May 14th.

**CONNECTION CARDS:** Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at [www.bethelyork.com](http://www.bethelyork.com) on the member connect tab or scan this code.



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Personal assisted listening devices are available.

**Given to the Lord:** Attendance: Worship 95, Offerings: Operating: Needed 2,854.90, Given \$2,075.25. **To God be the glory!**

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