

resurrection
REALity

**THE RISEN SAVIOR PROVIDES GOOD
SHEPHERDING**

Fourth Sunday of Easter

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

April 21, 2024

SERIES THEME: RESURRECTION REALITY

St. Paul writes, “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Big word: Indeed! Paul is stressing that we must not think of Jesus’ resurrection like a happy ending to another epic fable. The resurrection is not legend. It really happened. Easter is not just a holiday. Easter is history. On time’s infinite line, Jesus’ resurrection is the punctiliar moment that defines reality for us all. If Christ remained dead, he is a fraud and failure. But Christ has indeed been raised. So, the reality: Jesus is exactly what he claimed to be—the Son of God, our Lord and Savior. If Christ remained dead, then the grave is the final, ugly, rotten end of us all. But Christ has indeed been raised. So, the reality is Jesus’ resurrection proves that “all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). The reality of the resurrection does not just change our future, but the way we look at life now. The greatest theologian of the early church, Augustine, called the season of Easter “a joyful week of weeks”—seven wonderful weeks, each seven glorious days long. In this glorious season, let us meditate upon the breath-taking implications of the resurrection reality.

THEME OF THE DAY: THE RISEN SAVIOR PROVIDES GOOD SHEPHERDING

Scripture frequently pictures spiritual care in terms of a shepherd watching over sheep. Even folks unfamiliar with shepherding are able to grasp the meaning. Sheep are helpless animals—an easy meal for predators. For sheep to survive they needed a shepherd who not only leads them to sources of food, but who also is willing to tangle with a pack of wolves. Jesus is such a shepherd. He proved he is willing to lay down his life for his sheep. The word “pastor” comes from the Latin word for “shepherd.” Today, there are plenty of people—pastors, religious leaders, etc.—who claim they can provide healing for your soul. Yet, Scripture warns that “many” of these are “false prophets” (1 John 4:1) who “distort the truth” (Acts 20:30). Many! But the resurrection reality is that our Good Shepherd is faithful. He will raise up true sub-shepherds who know Christ and proclaim the truth of his gospel.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Quinton Corwin

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting Three (page 188 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 551 Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep

Stand

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

Amen.

Confession

CW 189

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

CW 213

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful and answer me.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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;



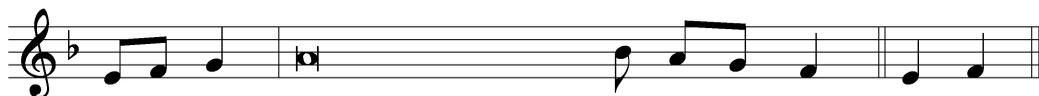
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



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 20:28–32

The good shepherd asks his sub-shepherd to keep watch over the flock.

²⁸ "Always keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves, who will not spare the flock, will come in among you. ³⁰ Even from your own group men will rise up, twisting the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be always on the alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped warning each one of you with tears.

³² "And now I entrust you to God and to the word of his grace, which has power to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 23- In Front of hymnal: I Will Live in the House of the LORD

Gospel

John 10:11–18

Jesus explains why he is the good shepherd.

¹¹ "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired man, who is not a shepherd, does not own the sheep. He sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ Because he works for money, he does not care about the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me ¹⁵ (just as the Father knows me and I know the Father). And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I also have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again. This is the commission I received from my Father."

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: 1 John 4:1-6

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. 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: 804 I Am Jesus' Little Lamb

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.**

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through 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: 554 The Lord's My Shepherd

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

City-Wide Garage Sale

On May 17th-18th we will be participating in Seward's City-Wide Garage Sale. Members are invited to bring items that will be given away for free. When someone tries to buy an item we will give them a postcard that says "Just as salvation is free through Christ, so is this item."

Following our service on May 12th members can set-up their items. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for members to designate when they would like to volunteer for the event. More information can be found on the weekly update. If you have any questions please contact Pastor Wilkens.

Friendship Evangelism Sunday and Bible Information Class

On May 26th we are having a Friendship Evangelism Sunday. Members are encouraged to invite friends, co-workers, or anyone else to attend our worship service on that Sunday.

Postcards for members to hand-out and invite others will be available soon. In connection with this event there will also be a public Bible Information Class on Wednesday May 29th that members can attend with those they invited to worship.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.graceseward.org on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gracelutheranseward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 11, Worship 41 in person, Facebook Reached 26, Audio/YouTube 6. Offerings: Home 6,050.00, WELS 25.00, Trinity 500.00 **To God be the glory!**

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