



Order of Worship

Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 21, 2024

Call to worship (based on Psalm 23)

Our Good Shepherd has led us to this place.

He leads us beside still waters; he restores our soul.

Even though we walk through dark valleys, even though we are fearful and in need of comfort,

Our cup overflows with God's goodness and mercy; we shall dwell in the house of the Lord our whole lives long.

Call to confession

The joy of this Easter season continues as we are called to Word and worship. Let us pause to confess our sins to our Good Shepherd.

Prayer of confession

Savior God, you guide us, but we are slow to follow and stubborn. You welcome us to your fold, but we make others feel as if they don't belong. Forgive our life-alienating ways, our exclusion and judgment; the way we evaluate and compare, demean and degrade. Redeem us. Restore us. Help us be faithful as your flock. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Christ forgives. Christ transforms. Christ renews. Christ leads us down the path of new beginnings. We are a new creation, ready to sing God's glory and testify to God's grace. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

God our helper, guide us into and through your Word, that we might be shaped by your Spirit's message to us today and transformed for service in your world. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon



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.**

Call for the offering

Humbled by God's generosity, let us offer our gifts to God and Christ's church.

Prayer of dedication

God, you meet our needs and transform us for service. Accept these gifts as signs of our gratitude and our commitment to Christ's ministry. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Holy God, Good Shepherd, we turn to you in prayer because we need a leader, someone we can trust, someone who can show us the way in complicated and confusing times.

Guide us, Good Shepherd.

The world's problems overwhelm. The burden of suffering is great. We bear witness to tragedy after tragedy on the evening news as wolves circle your innocent sheep, threatening our hope for a just world, a path to peace and a beloved kin-dom. What can we do, God? How can we be of help? What power do we have to transform evil to good?

Guide us, Good Shepherd.

When we doubt our worth and our belovedness, remind us that we are yours, that we belong, that we have place within your flock. Remind us and comfort us with the knowledge that in body and in soul, in life and in death we belong to you, our Savior and Shepherd. Unite your flock with your love and help us be as welcoming of others as you are to us.

Guide us, Good Shepherd.



Just as the shepherd knows each of his sheep, help us to know and care for the individuals that are in particular need of your merciful grace. Hear our prayers for:

- The innocent caught in the cross hairs of war...
- Soldiers suffering from moral injury and PTSD...
- The sick and those who care for them...
- The grieving, the exhausted, the depressed...
- Those in need of resurrection hope...

Now hear us as we pray together the prayer our Savior taught us saying, **“Our Father...”**

Charge and benediction

We are an Easter people! Christ is risen! Live into the hope of Christ's resurrection and follow him as our Good Shepherd.

May the grace, hope, peace and love of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with you now and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott and provided for free distribution.

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