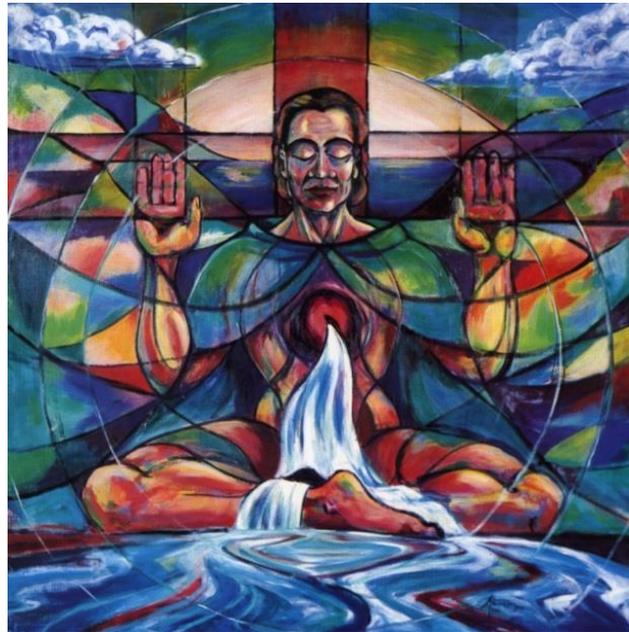


WORSHIP ON THE LORD'S DAY

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

5/8/22

The Father and I are one.



So there will be one flock, one shepherd.



LYONS-MUIR CHURCH

...transforming community

989-855-2247

the Rev. Jonathan Bratt Carle, pastor

616-443-6866

ORDER OF WORSHIP

GREETING & ANOUNCEMENTS

Events:

New Prayer Requests

Please continue in prayer for...

- Carol Ludwick, Cherry Travis, Janet Lynn, Fred Rainey, Al and Bonnie Mourer, Tom Morehead, Susan Craft, Dick and Linda Sage, Linda (Sandy Ide's sister in law), and Mark Clayton.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the 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 mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

"Fires"

Cyr/Nordhoff/Kuiper

I remember how You told me
That life may not be easy
And everything that I need
You've already given me

I remember how You told me
I can trust You completely
So why am I doubting
When You proved that You'd fight for me?

You've walked me through fires
Pulled me from flames
If You're in this with me
I won't be afraid

When the smoke billows higher, oh and higher
And it feels like I can barely breathe
I'll walk through these fires
'Cause You're walking with me

I'm changed by Your mercy
Covered by Your peace
I'm living out the victory
Doesn't mean I won't feel the heat

I can face anything (anything)
'Cause You're here with me (here with me)
I can do all things (do all things)
'Cause You strengthen me

I remember how You showed me
The price of my redemption
Lord, how could I question
When You proved that You'd die for me?

I'll walk through these fires (I'll walk through)
'Cause You're walking with me

"God So Loved"

Cash

Come all you weary, Come all you thirsty
Come to the well that never runs dry
Drink of the water
Come and thirst no more

Come all you sinners
Come find His mercy
Come to the table
He will satisfy
Taste of His goodness
Find what you're looking for

For God so loved
The world that He gave us
His one and only
Son to save us
Whoever believes in Him
Will live forever
Bring all your failures
Bring your addictions
Come lay them down
At the foot of the cross
Jesus is waiting there

With open arms
See His open arms
The power of hell
Forever defeated
Now it is well
I'm walking in freedom
For God so loved
God so loved the world

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him for the wonders of His love
His amazing love

His one and only Son to save us
Whoever believes in Him will live forever

The power of hell
Forever defeated
Now it is well
I'm walking in freedom
For God so love
God so love the world

Opening Prayer
(Bill Trommater, Lay Leader)

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”

Oakley

Jesus, lover of my soul
Jesus, I will never let You go
You've taken me from the miry clay
You've set my feet upon the rock
And now I know

I love you , I need you
Though my world may fall
I'll never let You go

My Savior (my Savior)
My closest Friend
I will worship You until the very end

Sing it, Jesus
Sweet Jesus
And You've taken me
You've set my feet upon the rock
And now I know

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Guide us, O Lord, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your truth we might find freedom, and in your will discover peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Revelation 5: 1-14

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song:

‘You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God
saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;
you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God,
and they will reign on earth.’

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice,

‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!’

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,

‘To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!’

And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ And the elders fell down and worshipped.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John 10: 11-30

‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The 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. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.’

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

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

Again the Jews were divided because of these words. Many of them were saying, ‘He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?’ Others were saying, ‘These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?’

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’

Jesus answered, ‘I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.’

These are the words of eternal life.

Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SPECIAL MUSIC

LMC Handbell Choir

SERMON

“One Flock, One Shepherd”

The Lord be with you.

(And also with you.)

Let us pray:

Holy One, Spirit of justice and peace: transfigure the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts that we might hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. In the Name of Jesus we pray: Amen.

First of all... happy Mother's Day! I love Mother's Day, because it offers us a chance to celebrate all the people in our lives who unselfishly pour themselves out for the wellbeing and sustenance of their family, friends, and community. Of course, some mother's actually have offspring; and this is the primary and unique meaning of the word. But what we see women doing with babies and children, we also see individuals doing who have no children at all. So we understand from mothers what “mothering” is... and no one needs to bear offspring to share their abundance and grace and warmth with the world around them. So to everyone woman gathered for worship today... let me say again: happy Mother's Day.

Unselfishly pouring yourself out for the wellbeing and sustenance of family, friends, and community... Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Indeed, sounds very much to me like the God of Calvary's Cross. And so I think there is very good reason in God's own actions to acknowledge that She mother's the creation from an endless store of grace and care. And this reminds us that there is no single way of describing God that sums everything up. God is Mother, Creator, Spirit... and today, we'll focus on one name for God in particular: Shepherd.

As you can probably guess, I've been sorting through a lot of books lately, trying to figure out what I need or want to keep in ministry going forward. I found a lot of things that were out of date, I found some treasures I had forgotten, and I found some things I always meant to read. One of these is called *Worship as Pastoral Care* by William Willimon. Will, as he is affectionately called by everyone, is a retired United Methodist bishop and has been Dean of the Chapel at Duke Divinity School for many years. But back in the day, he wrote a lot of books. *Worship as Pastoral Care* was published in 1979, the year after I was born, but I'm just getting around to reading it now. And as always, when a good book crosses our paths, we read things that are worth sharing. About half way through Will's book, he's trying to get to the bottom of what makes for effective worship, and he ends chapter 4 by sharing a little story. It goes like this:

The minister [of a church] had asked a number of people in the congregation to prepare to offer short prayers at a stated time in the worship service. One by one, each person stood where he or she had been sitting in the congregation and offered [their] prayer. All ages and walks of life were represented. The prayers were simple, sincere, and moving. The entire congregation was visibly touched. Their prayers appeared to be a welcome change from the congregation's usually rather formal, restrained, impersonal service. When the prayers ended, there were a few seconds of awkward silence. The minister seemed to have been taken off guard by the depth of the prayers and seemed as deeply moved as anyone... The minister broke the silence by beginning

to talk in fast nervous, loud chatter: “Well, uh... Thank you for doing that for us. Now let’s continue our service with the announcements. First, are there any visitors today? No visitors? OK. Well, everyone take up your bulletins, and let me call your attention to some important activities at our church this week...”

(Abingdon Press, 1979, p. 97-98)

Bishop Willimon has a great deal to say about the pastor’s spiritual ineptitude in his response, but one question sums up his frustration: “Why was [the minister] leading the congregation away from worship rather than into worship” (p. 98).

I’ve thought about my own response to this story and to Willimon’s question, and I think what happened in that moment of prayer was that the everyone in the room had an experience of the Holy Spirit leading worship and not the minister. The people opened their hearts to each other and to the Lord, and the Lord drew near to them. The pastor had done the faithful thing by inviting people to pray, but I’m not sure he had yet believed the teaching in the Letter of James that, “the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

I was mulling all of this over when I read the Gospel passage for today – the Good Shepherd discourse in John chapter 10. And when I came to the phrase “So there will be one flock, one shepherd...” I realized just exactly what the minister in that little story had done incorrectly: he had imagined somewhere deep in his sense of himself, that he was the shepherd of his church, rather than Christ Jesus. This is a mistake, because the best any of us can do is point others to Jesus as the Spirit gives us ability and opportunity. As Paul points out in his letter to the Ephesians:

The gifts Christ gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.
(Ephesians 4: 11-13)

We are called and gifted to discern and join the ministry of Jesus, not to imagine or take up a ministry of our own. My former bishop in Tennessee, Bill McAlilly, put it like this: “The church of God does not have a mission; the mission of God has a church.” Bishop McAlilly offered wisdom to the Annual Conference in his sermon that day, for no one can stand in the place of the Christ. No one is worthy to call themselves the Good Shepherd except the One who has laid down his life for the flock. No one may think to create worship out of thin air without the Spirit who once raised the Good Shepherd from the dead. So says St. John the Divine in his Book of Revelation:

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’

(Revelation 5: 1-5)

Jesus, the Christ, is exalted over all creatures, for he is not a creature: he is the begotten Living Word of the Almighty, revealed in creaturely form that we might know the heart of God. None can stand in his place; none may think to claim his glory; none may be worshipped and adored but him. No one's advice is as good as his; no one's grace as powerful... no one's love as precious. Jesus is the object of our desire. Jesus is the recipient of our praise. To Jesus we address our lamentation and sorrow. Jesus is the Shepherd, and the best any pastor can do is to create the conditions in which the Body of Christ can hear his voice.

And so, my dear sisters and brother, as I take my leave of you, and move forward into a new facet of Christ's ministry, please listen carefully and hear this word of grace: For a time, you may or may not have a minister standing right here, but you've learned every needful thing. You know that to worship means to open your imaginations to the scriptures. You know that to praise means to lift your voices in Easter hope. You know that to pray means to open your hearts and lift your hands to receive the love and liberation of Jesus Christ. You know that giving thanks means glorifying God with your trust, even in the face of great hardship and distress. You know all I have to teach you. And whether there is a person standing here who has a diploma or not, if you long for the Spirit to pour out God's grace, you will always hear the voice of the Good Shepherd calling you and guiding you. For there are many pastors, but there is One Flock and One Shepherd.

All of us together are the Body of Christ, whether here or anywhere. We have been called and equipped to become the hands, and feet, and heart, and mind, of Him who died and rose again. Fear nothing, dear friends; for there is no power at all which can prevent the Spirit's coming among you, except that you yourselves imagine that it isn't possible. And while the parting of friends is a bittersweet sorrow, our hope is not for today only, but for that Great Gettin' Up Mornin, when all the dry bones in the Valley of the Shadow of Death shall be knit together once more, to stand in the power of the One who's Name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Savior, Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend! We will shed our tears, for change is hard and the gift of our fellowship is truly a blessing. But I tell you the Good News, my sisters and brothers: Whether any of our churches rise or fall, Christ is coming! Yay, Amen! For he and the Mother-Father are one. And when the Almighty God gives the angels charge at last, the Cherubim shall blaze a trail through all the woe of the world, and put all Death to death upon the edges of their flaming swords. Then shall we see Him, the Good Shepherd, coming on the clouds with terrible majesty, ultimate beauty, and great glory. Therein lies our hope. And when the Good Shepherd calls us, we shall know his voice. Then hand in hand we shall walk again in Eden and no more dust and ashes be.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghosts.

So be it, now and forever.
Thanks be to God.

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE #515

“Since Jesus Came Into My Heart”

Hymn: Rufus H. McDaniel, 1914
Tune: *MCDANIEL (Gabriel)* 1914 Chas. H. Gabriel

What a wonderful change in my
life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which
long I had sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Since Jesus came into my heart,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
Floods of joy o'er my soul
like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

I have ceased from my wand'ring and going
astray,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And my sins, which were many,
are all washed away,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

I shall go there to dwell in that City,
I know
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And I'm happy, so happy, as onward I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

PASTORAL PRAYER

*Prayers are offered for the world, the church, and our community.
After a time of silent prayer, all continue:*

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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE

**“What a Friend (E to W)”
Maher**

Everybody has trials and temptations
Everybody knows heart break, isolation

And forever and ever His heart is my home
Everybody has fears, everybody got worries
Everybody knows sorrow, devastation

But we can lay our burdens down
Lay our burdens down

No more betrayal, for He is faithful
He fills me up and my cup runneth over
No more betrayal, for He is faithful
How He has proven it over and over
Over and over

What a friend we have in Jesus
East to west my sins are gone
I see grace on every horizon

CLOSING PRAYER & BENEDICTION

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time, with one accord, to make our common supplications unto thee; and thou hast promised, through thy well-beloved Son, that when two and three gather together in thy Name, thou shalt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be best for us: Granting us, in this world, knowledge of thy truth; and, in the world to come, life everlasting. **Amen.**

May the LORD bless you and keep you;
May the LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

In the Name of the Holy Trinity,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

Amen.