

4th SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 3, 2020

For video viewing of music and service go to:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEO_pAVddaeV1_dOvvUd5eITX0IJKxqmM

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray together:

C: *O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen*

***THE FIRST LESSON**

Acts 2:42-47

⁴²[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

***THE SECOND LESSON**

1 Peter 2:19-25

¹⁹It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. ²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his

wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

John 10:1-10

[Jesus said:] ¹"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

SERMON: PASTOR RICHARD CARBAUGH

A wealthy man had lost his son. Looking back on that difficult time, a time when he was as frightened and as lost as he had ever been, he remembered coming to the following conclusion. He said: "Here is something I cannot buy my way out of. Here is something I cannot work my way out of. Here is something I can only trust my way out of." When tragedy comes into our lives, the confusion and the hurt and the anger make it difficult to understand what has happened, difficult to know what to do or say, difficult to know how to go on. The one thing, perhaps the only thing that can be done in such a time, is to trust our way out of it.

Whether it is some personal challenge or loss, or whether it is enduring the uncertainty with the current situation in which we find ourselves, there are certain things we can do, certain actions we can take or refrain from taking that can help make things a little better, a little more bearable. But ultimately, no matter what we do, moving ahead is really a matter of trusting our way out of it.

Psalm 23 has been called a song of trust. It is a trust, not so much that certain things will happen in a certain way, as it is a trust in a presence in the midst of it all. It is a presence like that of a caring shepherd watching over the sheep. I can't hear this psalm without thinking of the story of the famous actor who was invited to a small country church. The church was filled with anticipation. The

actor recited a number of passages of scripture, the last of which was Psalm 23. It was a very moving experience for everyone. However, after he had finished, the oldest member of the congregation stood and also recited Psalm 23 - and his words were the most touching moment of the evening. The actor stood and said: "I was sitting here wondering why this man's words were more powerful, more moving than mine - and I concluded that it was because, while I knew the shepherd's psalm, this man knows the shepherd!"

The trust expressed in this Psalm is far from a naive, blind trust. All the pain and loss and adversity of life's journey are there. All the complexities of lives spent in conflict and fear are there. And yet, also there is the affirmation that God's presence can be trusted in the valley of the shadows. Anyone who has lived knows life is not all full tables and overflowing cups. Sometimes our hair isn't anointed with oil, but grimed with grease - or different because we can't get to the salon. Sometimes we are not lying in green pastures, but languishing on blue Mondays. Sometimes we are not resting beside still waters, but being swamped by storms and rising tides. Every person knows the valley of the shadow. Some are born into a valley of poverty, abuse and illness. Some are born in green pastures, but dig their own dark valley through addictions, greed or violence. Sometimes we find ourselves in the valley by powers and circumstances beyond our control. None of us gets out of this life without walking in the valley - there are no short cuts around it and often it seems like the walk will last forever. But hear again what the psalm says: "Though I walk THROUGH the valley." God does not intend for us to stay in the valley. We CAN walk THROUGH our problems. We CAN walk THROUGH our sorrows. We CAN walk THROUGH our mistakes - if we can trust the One who is walking with us.

And yet, that trusting is often the hardest thing for us to do. When something happens in our lives, trust is often one of the first casualties - whether it is trust in others, trust in the future, trust in being safe again, even trust in the promise and presence of God. But the truth is that trust may be our only hope. Trusting our way out of it may be the only thing we have.

There was a little girl who was clinging to a boat that had capsized. She held on as long as she could, but her small arms grew weary. As she cried out that she just couldn't hold on any longer, her father grabbed hold of her arm and said: "Don't worry, I'll hold onto you!" In our Baptism, God grabbed hold of us and said: "Don't worry, I'll hold onto you and I will never let go. Nothing will break my grip on you." The question is sometimes asked: "How do we live in this world without letting the world claim us, without letting the world determine who and how we are?" The reality is that it is hard to do. But our hope lies in remembering that we have been claimed by the One who is IN, but not OF the world. Our hope lies in knowing the Shepherd.

You may know that in some places when sheep of different flocks gather around a watering hole, and it is time to leave, a shepherd will call out to his sheep and only the sheep that belong to that shepherd will respond. They won't respond to other voices, but only to the voice of their shepherd. They respond because they have come to trust that voice. They respond because they know that shepherd.

Philip Yancy tells of a friend who was swimming in a large lake at dusk. He had got out some distance from shore and, without warning, an unusual evening fog surrounded him and he could no longer see the shore. He splashed around trying to find the right direction, but soon decided to stop and conserve his energy. As he did, he was able to hear a familiar voice calling from shore. He moved toward the sound of that voice and eventually reached the shore safely.

Jesus said: "I am the Good Shepherd. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me. And they will never perish." There is a power for life that our Resurrected Lord has set loose in this world. It is the power that walks with us through the valley of shadows. It is the power that prepares a table before us. It is the power that fills our cup to overflowing. It is the power that anoints our head with the oil of gladness. As we walk through the valley, may we be able to hear the voice of our Shepherd calling us, and find ourselves trusting that voice as it says: "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can snatch you out of my hand." Though I walk through the valley of the shadow, I will fear no evil, for You are with me, and I will trust You always. Amen.

***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;

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic 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**

***PRAYERS**

A: Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *(A brief silence.)*

A: O God our Healer, show your compassion for the whole human family that is in turmoil and burdened with illness and with fear. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Come to our aid as the coronavirus spreads globally, heal those who are sick, support and protect their families and friends from being infected. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Grant us your spirit of love and self-discipline so that we may come together, working to control and eliminate the coronavirus. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Make us vigilant, attentive, and proactive in the eradication of all diseases, malaria, dengue, HIV & AIDS, and others that create suffering and often result in death for many people. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Heal our self-centeredness and indifference that makes us worry only when the virus threatens us, open ways beyond timidity and fear that too easily ignore our neighbor. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Strengthen and encourage those in public health services and in the medical profession: care-givers, nurses, attendants, doctors, all who commit themselves to caring for the sick and their families. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Inspire, give insight and hope to all researchers focused on developing a vaccine. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Sustain all workers and business owners who suffer loss of livelihood due to shut-downs, quarantines, closed borders, and other restrictions... protect and guard all those who must travel. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Guide the leaders of the nations that they speak the truth, halt the spread of misinformation and act with justice so that all your family may know healing. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Heal our world, heal our bodies, strengthen our hearts and our minds, and in the midst of turmoil, give us hope and peace. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Hold in your gentle embrace all who have died and who will die this day. Comfort their loved ones in their despair. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

A: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Anderson, Anton and Arnold families. For the talents and good things You have given each of them. Keep them united and faithful to You and each other. Guide them, protect them and equip them to do Your will. Hear our cry, O God,

C: listen to our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Remember all your family, the entire human race, and all your creation, in your love.

C: Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

C: 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.

***BENEDICTION**

P: May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: **Amen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR CARBAUGH'S OFFICE HOURS

For the time being Pastor Carbaugh will be working from home. If you need to reach him, his email address is: messiahmechpr@gmail.com. In the event of a pastoral emergency, he can be reached at 540-760-4089. Please be safe and take care during this challenging time for us.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Beginning March 8th, we began providing a summary of the financial well-being of our congregation. Here is this week's information:

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$3185 through April 26th (up from \$2923 on April 19th).
- We are \$3713.41 behind of the year-to-date budget needs (down from \$1854.41 behind the budget the week prior).

LWR COVID-19 PROJECT

COVID-19 is threatening vulnerable communities, and Lutheran World Relief urgently needs cloth face masks to send to them. The cloth mask you sew in your living room will provide love and protection to a neighbor in need halfway around the world. How many will you make to help stop the spread? To sign up and get more information go to: www.lwr.org/masks.

ARE WE DESIGNATED?

Over the years Messiah members have enrolled in donation programs through Kroger's Community Award Program and Amazon Smile that allow for you to choose a charitable organization to receive a small donation based upon what you spend in these places. If you would like for Messiah to be your designated organization at one or both of these businesses, please enroll directly with them and specify us. If you've already enrolled and would like us to receive donations, please check to see if Messiah is your charitable organization. With God's will and your generosity, Messiah will continue to survive!

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN...

In agreement with Governor Northam's order, Church Council voted for our building to remain closed to the public until June 10, 2020. Davina will continue to hold office hours during the week and we will continue to publish our Mid-Week and Sunday Services on YouTube, the church website, and Facebook. We will keep you updated on future developments when they occur. Stay well and safe until we are physically together again. We remain God's Church even though we are apart. Peace be with you all. - Your Church Council

UPDATE ON PASTOR RYAN RADTKE

We are excited to announce that Pastor Ryan Radtke has announced to the congregation of Hope Lutheran his acceptance of call with Messiah. At this point, we can now openly celebrate and share updates regarding our "what's next" with Pastor Ryan and his family. Your patience and understanding are appreciated as they continue to navigate this complex process. Please keep in mind that there is still much work to be done for the Radtke family and the congregation of Hope Lutheran. Please continue to keep them in your prayers and, for now, we can look forward with hope and anticipation for when we ALL will be together again.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Don't forget that the congregation's expenses continue every week. Please try to mail in your offering to the church office, 8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, or use on-line giving through Vanco which is available on the church website. See messiahmech.com for more details.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those who would like to place announcements in our Sunday 'ebulletin' please send them to Donna Shaw at dmslaw70@gmail.com by Wednesday for inclusion.

Prayer List

WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Kenneth Deere	"Doc" Kondaki
Adam Sworak, Sr.	Linda Krupa
JoAn Firebaugh	Mac McAllister
Bill Fulop	Roberta McMillen
Elisabeth Gardner	Pat Motley
Werner Gardner	Nathan, Ruth Schroeder & family
Steve Gilnett	Judy Schwerdtfeger
Geoffrey Honan	

WE PRAY FOR OUR EXTENDED FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Danny Allen, friend of the Whirleys
Boyd Allison, friend of Jean Wightman.
Family and Friends of Dennis Anderson, father of James Anderson.
Joe Griffin, friend of Anne Mason.
Pete Gunn, friend of the Schwerdtfeger's
Christina Nibali, sister of Anita Philip.
Dee Schroeder, sister-in-law of Roger.
Tim Schroeder, nephew of Roger.
Family and friends of Wanda Umlauf, Vicar Ginny Banister's mother
T.J., grandson of the Whirleys.

Pastor Carbaugh, as he walks with us in this interim time
Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families
All law enforcement, firefighters & first responders
The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine, of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry

Hospitals, nursing homes, other health care facilities
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The World Health Organization Medical researchers and scientists
Schools, workplaces, government institutions and municipal agencies
For all who travel