

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
July 18, 2021, 8:00, 9:15, 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION - *Images of the House of God and the Good Shepherd are the two ideas that combine to challenge and inspire us in this week. In a world where so many of us seek to domesticate God, the Scriptures reveal a God who will not be muzzled and who calls us into a diverse community in which people are cared for, protected, and filled with God's Spirit in order to live as caring shepherds to all.*

THEME AND VERSE

The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want.

I seek the grace of God and my cup runneth over. I seek the will of God and my cup runneth over. I seek the strength of God and my cup runneth over.

How generous is God's love?

So much the world cannot contain it. The Lord is my Shepherd and I lack nothing.

PSALM 23 (RSV) A Psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I 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 my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

HYMN

"Kum Ba Yah"

Burgundy # 43

Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah.
Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. O Lord, kum ba yah.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

When the disciples return from their mission, they tell Jesus about all they have done, and he calls them to rest. But, as they try to withdraw to a quiet place, the crowds follow them and Jesus has compassion on them because they are like sheep without a shepherd. Then, wherever he goes, the people bring the sick to him for healing.

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like

sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. ⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We have lost sight of our hope; we live as aliens, separated from God's faithful people.

Lord, you give us gifts to lead your people in our families, among peers, at work, or in the church, but we fail to attend to the matters of leading. We forfeit justice and righteousness for our comfort. We withhold mercy for self interest. We speak as leaders and live as a bad examples. We claim exhaustion, or inexperience, or lack of resource when your sheep are scattered, hungry, lonely, and in need of what you give us abundantly. Forgive us, Lord. Save us.

We who once were scattered and far off, now are brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ. God will find us, the lost, and raise us up as leaders. For Christ's sake our sins are forgiven. For the purpose of salvation we are made members of the household of God.

By the power of the Holy Spirit we may all come together as one holy temple in the Lord. To the glory of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Sheep without a Shepherd"

HYMN

"Kum Ba Yah"

Burgundy # 43

Come by here, my Lord, kum ba yah. Come by here, my Lord, kum ba yah.
Come by here, my Lord, kum ba yah. O Lord, kum ba yah.

Someone's praying, Lord, kum ba yah. Someone's praying, Lord, kum ba yah.
Someone's praying, Lord, kum ba yah. O Lord, kum ba yah.

Someone's singing, Lord, kum ba yah. Someone's singing, Lord, kum ba yah.
Someone's singing, Lord, kum ba yah. O Lord, kum ba yah.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving Shepherd, you know our names; you care for us. When we face darkness and death, you walk beside us. When we hunger for your love, you fill us with your presence. When we are fearful, you welcome us to your table. All we need Lord is this, may we dwell in the house of goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. Amen.

HYMN

“Dona Nobis Pacem”

Blue # 774

Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

READING: Ephesians 2:11-22

This letter reminds the Gentile audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled to God and brought into one community. The lines of division have been removed by God through Christ's cross. Now both are part of God's household and are built into a temple for the Spirit to dwell.

¹¹So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making

peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

HYMN

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

Green # 456

The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth
And, where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.

SERMON - *“LIMITLESS! God desires a perfect union that is greater than the sum of the parts, nor is it limited to a time or place. This kingdom rule counters our earthly understanding with quantities or terms!”*

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still; thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight; thine unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, you meet us here at the crossroads of our life. You send us with the charge, "Go into all the world." Your healing takes place in your time, in our place, in ways that we could not imagine. May this meal, which feeds us in this time, strengthen us in our faith so that we may go from here empowered, healed, and forgiven, ready to share your love and mercy to all your people. Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Go now, proclaiming to all how much the Father has done for you. Be as one with each other in Christ Jesus. Wait for the Lord and be ready to receive the power of his Spirit.

We live empowered by God’s love.

And may God be your fortress; may Christ Jesus release you from all that troubles you; and may the Holy Spirit give you light and truth to sustain you day and night.

Amen! We go in Christ’s name to love and serve!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

Two words stand out in this week’s readings: “Shepherd” and “House”. Both of these words come together in a remarkable and exciting way. Psalm 23 has a human king praising God as the Great Shepherd who alone can truly protect, provide for, and build a house (or a place in God’s house) for God’s people.

In Mark's Gospel Jesus fulfils both aspects of this divine dream. As the human descendant of David, and the divine Son of God, Jesus has compassion on God's people who are like scattered sheep, and he heals, cares for, and provides for them as a truly good Shepherd.

Paul, in Ephesians, takes the picture one step further as the people of God, both Jew and Gentile, find a place together in God's household of grace, but also become, together, a house (temple) for God's Spirit.

In Jesus, this promise is fulfilled, as the promised Good Shepherd creates God's divine house from both Jew and Gentile who receive his grace and submit to his reign. Finally, those who find their home in God's household are called to be a house for God's Spirit and a community in which all people can find a place to belong and a connection with God through the Spirit. It's a message of divine grace, sovereignty and care, and of human reconciliation, and service – these things always go together in the Reign of God!

The vision that Paul describes, of a diverse community in which all people are cared for and through which God works in the world, is what we are all called to as Church, and in our families and neighborhoods. Unfortunately, we too often use God's name to justify lives and attitudes that are far removed from this vision. Husbands try to justify their bullying of wives and children in God's name. Pastors try to justify manipulating and controlling their congregations in God's name. Parents try to justify bullying and controlling their children in God's name. And Christians try to justify their rejection and abuse of those of other faiths or no faith, of those of different perspectives and even of those who are different in race, language, or gender, in God's name.

Rather than celebrate the house of God in which all can find a home, we can easily become door-keepers and draw dividing lines. Rather than fulfil our role as shepherds to those for whom we are responsible, or those with whom we live and worship, we have chosen legalism, pointing fingers, and self-righteousness too often.

The call of this week is to learn to see God's Spirit within each person, and in our community as a whole, and to embrace the diversity of the community of faith. Then, as a community, we are called to care for and protect the least and the most vulnerable in our family and neighborhood. As we seek to follow the Good Shepherd, we are called to live as good shepherds for all we meet and in so doing allow God to build us into a house – a community – of grace and love in which God's Spirit "lives" and moves.

John van de Laar at sacredise.com