



April 25, 2021
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Sunday Meditation

Smile more than you cry
Give more than you take and
Love more than you hate.

Author Unknown

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ
Mt Hope 8:30am Greenfield 9:50am
4th Sunday of Easter

April 25, 2021
Grace 11:00am

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

* Doxology

* Offertory Prayer

TH # 551

Loving God, bless these gifts and all the ways in which we give. May each of our gifts be a part of co-creating and tending to the love, safety, belonging, and dignity You envision for the world. Amen.

* *Call to Worship*

Love one another, even when love involves risk.

We love as God loves us.

Love and care for others, even when caring is hard.

We love and care as God loves and cares for us.

Love in truth and action.

By this we are known as children of God.

* *Opening Hymn* “*When Morning Gilds the Skies*”

Mt Hope VH #41

Greenfield CH #251

Grace VH #41

Gathering Prayer

Shepherd of love, guide our thoughts and our actions, that we too might become shepherds of love. Speak to our hearts as we listen this day, that our hearts may expand and embrace all of your sheep. Love us fully, that we might love all of the flocks of your world as fully as we are loved by you. In your shepherding love, we pray. Amen.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 23 NKJV

The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.

² He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.

³ He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Prayer of Pardon

Holy One, we hear the comforting ancient poetry of the psalmist but wonder, is it true? Will you really provide for what we need? Will you bring us to a place of rest? Will you protect us from enemies, even when they share our dinner table? We confess that rather than being only filled with holy wonder, we are also filled with skepticism at the ancient words. We can quickly tally up the times we didn't feel provided for or protected from danger. We count the times we could not catch a break when we desperately needed it. So Holy One, shepherd our busy minds back to the here and now, help our spirits forgive the grudges we hold, and invite us to experience You as truly present. In these moments of quiet, offer us rest for a moment.

Words of Assurance

Beloved People of God, there is wisdom in our questions, but God is steadfast. God's presence is unwavering and will accompany us through every terrifying valley. God's spirit is unshakeable and will sit with us even in the presence of formidable foes. God's love is relentless and will offer us goodness and mercy all the days of our life. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Epistle Lesson

1 John 3:16-24 NIV

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

John 10:11-18 NIV

Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)

TH #497

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message

* *Meditation Hymn* “*The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want*”

Mt Hope VH #293

Greenfield CH #694

Grace VH #293

Today's Message

* *The Apostle's Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

