



4300 N. 82nd Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-5525
Pastor Joseph Dillon
www.bethanyscottsdale.com

Worship
April 25, 2021

GATHERING

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Call to Worship

Pastor: Come, people of God, and worship the Christ.

Reader: Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.

Let us come and worship the Christ who forgives sin.

Opening Hymn – “Jesus is Risen”

Greeting

P The peace of the Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P May the risen Christ fill us with life, light, and hope.

C Thanks be to God. Jesus is risen. Alleluia! AMEN.

Hymn of Praise – “Easter Alleluia”

THE WORD

First Reading

Acts 4:5-12

The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, ‘By what power or by what name did you do this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is “the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.”

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.'

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Psalm 23

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 right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint 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

my whole life long.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Response - "*The Lord is My Shepherd*"

Gospel Reading

John 10:11-18

'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.'

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

4th Sunday of Easter, April 27, 2021. "Give Up Your Life."

39 years ago, a late winter/spring blizzard blew through eastern Montana and western North Dakota. Being early May, many people had taken their winter survival gear out their cars and pickups. One story that caught my eye in the days that followed. It was a story about a mother and her young daughter who were caught in the storm between towns in western North Dakota. The storm fell upon the area so quickly that many were caught on the road. The mom had hoped to outrun the worst part of the storm, but the snow was falling so fast that soon the roads were clogged with snow, the mom could no longer drive and stopped alongside the road.

The temperature was dropping fast and soon it was 5 below zero. She ran the car off and on until they ran out of gas. The wind chill was now 35 below zero, and it was here that the mom made a fatal decision. She had seen some lights in the distance through the snow. She believed that she and her daughter could make the lights, while she believed it might lead to injuries of some kind, or death.

She wrapped her daughter up in what warm clothes they had plus the child's baby blanket. Unfortunately, the 50 mile-a-hour wind and the driving snow sucked the energy out of her body. Finally, she could go no further, and she tenderly laid the child in the snow and laid herself over the top of her child. When rescuers found them a day and a half later, the child was fine, but her mother had given her life that her daughter might live.

The willingness to give one's life for another is a rare enough event that when it occurs, we are almost forced to ask ourselves if we could give up ourselves to save another. Parents will often risk their lives for their children; at times will risk their lives for their parents. Friends will sometimes risk their lives for their friends. Seldom, however, will we risk our lives for strangers. Of course, the reality there, is that we don't know the stranger, and frankly, their welfare is not as great a concern for us as is the life of someone we know and care about.

“I lay down my life for my sheep.” For Jesus this is the measure of a shepherd of any type—the key for those who call themselves shepherds is simple in Jesus eyes: Are they willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the flocks. For Jesus, the shepherd is there to lead people away from danger, not into it. For Jesus, the shepherd is there to nurture the people, the shepherd is not there to exploit the people; the shepherd is there to search out those who are lost; the shepherd is NOT to give up when the task becomes difficult. And lastly the true shepherd is to place themselves between those who would steal the sheep and destroy them.

Christ put himself in harms’ way for us, while we were yet strangers. Pastors, priests, lay people down through the centuries have laid down their lives for their people: they have been there for the outcast; the needy; the poor; they/we have brought comfort to the bereaved, hope to the dying; courage to the fearful; and to those full of doubt. They have loved the people that God had given into their care. And the Good Shepherds of today do the same. Their concern and focus is their people.

On the other side are the hirelings—and it is their fruits that give them away. Charles Price writes about these: “We live in a world teeming with religious leaders, all of whom claim to be bearers of the truth. The criterion for recognition of the Good Shepherd is at once simple and devastating. The Good Shepherds would die for their people, they give themselves for their people, so that they all may live in Christ. The Osama bin Laden’s; the Assad’s of Syria; the Putin’s and all the demagogues of our world are weighted in the balance of that scale and are found wanting. In deed they are found wanting, for what they ask of their followers is their death. And others who would call themselves shepherds of the people, end up fleecing the sheep if you will, and will and have abandon them when the world turns to darkness.

It is the Good Shepherd who comes looking for us in that darkness. It is the Good Shepherd who reminds us that we are His sheep, and that He is willing to lay down—and indeed, he has laid down His life for us, but he also showed that He has the power over darkness and death. He has the power to call us forth to lead his flock and to proclaim to the world beyond these walls, that this Christ whom died and rose again is also the Good Shepherd, the one who has willingly laid down his life for us all, so that we all may have new life—eternal life in His name. Amen.

Hymn of the Day – *“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”*

Affirmation of Faith

We are an Easter People! We proclaim our belief in a God of life; in the image of the Creator, we are made. With God’s Spirit woven into the fabric of our being we are called to be caretakers of the earth and to bear the life-giving energy of the divine.

We are an Easter People! We proclaim our belief in Jesus Christ, sent by God to be a living example of God’s desire for the world. We believe that in Jesus, the powers of darkness and death have no claim over us, that our broken lives find healing in God’s compassionate mercy. Jesus is that compassion and mercy risen and alive in the world today.

We are an Easter People! We proclaim our belief in God’s gift of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit empowers us be the light and life of Jesus in the world. This Spirit is the vitality of God’s embrace active within us through what we do and what we say.

Thanks be to God for life and new life! Christ is risen! Alleluia! AMEN!

Prayers of the People

P. As we are alive in Risen Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we dare bring our prayers before God who has promised to hear us and to respond in steadfast love.

(A Brief Silence)

P. Living God, while we celebrate your resurrection, we still find ourselves full of questions, and at times, doubt. So, Lord we ask that you would open our hearts and minds through the Scriptures, through listening to your quiet, still voice that comes to us in times of silence when we listen for your word for us. Help us Lord to embody what it means to bring your word to the world through what we say and what we do. Hear us O God:

C. Your mercy is great.

P. God of all, the peoples of the nations hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness and they call on you for guidance and strength. Answer their hopes with the strength of your peace, the gift of faith, and the grace of your hope. Give insight to the leaders of nations and factions that they would lead their people in justice and peace. Hear us O God:

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and you answer them in their distress. Surround those who are sick and suffering with your compassion, and use those medical personnel and care-givers that you have called to care for the ill to aid you in bringing healing and hope to those in need. Hear us O God:

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Lord, here at Bethany, we would ask that your Spirit guide the search for a new pastor for your people here. Bless our Call Committee with the spirit of discernment as they ponder those who believe that God is calling them to a new congregation in Scottsdale, AZ. Hear us O God:

C. Your mercy is great.

P. In the hope of new life in Christ, O Lord, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Offering

Offertory

Prayer of Blessing

P Let us pray:

C God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these gifts which we have received from your generous hand. Use them to bring your blessing into the lives of others. AMEN.

MEAL

A Brief Confession

P In the power of the risen Lord, we make our confession to God.

C Gracious and forgiving God, we seek your pardon for actions that have caused harm; for the lack of action that could have been an expression of your love. Forgive and heal us Lord.

P We rest in the mercy of a compassionate God. We are an Easter people; we are a forgiven people.

C Thanks be to God. AMEN.

Communion Dialogue

P The Lord is risen!

C We have seen the Lord!

P Lift up your hearts, people of God.

C We lift them to the Risen Christ.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C We offer our thanks and praise to the One who gives us new life.

P On the night he was betrayed ...

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Communion Invitation

P: Come to God's table; be fed and satisfied.

C: We come to feed our spirit and be in the presence of God.

Communion Music

Communion Blessing

P: Let us pray:

C: Radiant God, may your Word take flesh in us that we may be your holy people. May this meal empower us to better be your loving servants. AMEN.

SENDING

Benediction

Pastor: May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ fill you with every good blessing. Amen.

Closing Hymn – “How Can I Keep from Singing”

Dismissal

Paster: Go in Peace...to live and serve in the way of the cross.

Response: Thanks be to God.

(To watch the videotaped version of the worship service, click the link below)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt8qX94ICK-omDHSc71en4w>