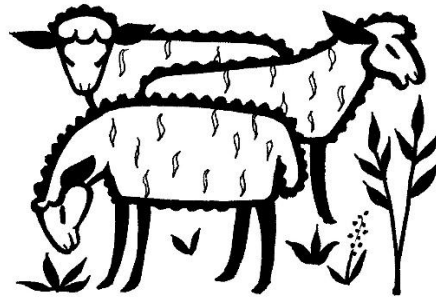




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Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 26, 2026
Now the Feast and Celebration
Hymnal Supplement (1991)

Today is sometimes called “Good Shepherd Sunday.” Jesus is called the “gate” of the sheep in today’s gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world’s violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God’s tender care to all creation.

We at Grace Lutheran Church strive to reflect and proclaim the love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through loving care and community service.

A warm welcome to all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God’s Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran Church worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmi̓ñəṃ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in the name of our Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to worship our God in whom we are without want or fear. For our needs are met in that, by God's grace, we are led to the still waters and green pastures that restore our souls with hope in God's righteousness. And so, in our welcome into this community full of God's goodness and mercy, and we sing praises to our Lord and give thanks for the good news that instills in us faith, joy, and peace, through the wisdom and guidance of Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GREETING HYMN: My Shepherd, You Supply My Need (#782)

GREETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The comforting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the shepherding love of God, and the welcoming fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

NOW THE FEAST (HS p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you make your voice known to us as you call us into service, community, and love for all people. Show us your ways of righteousness and lead us on the path to your green pastures, in the presence of the gate of life, opened for us to enter as your children to live it most abundantly, through Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47

A reading from Acts.

Today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

⁴² [The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day 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, ⁴⁷ praising 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 word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

² **The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³ You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall 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, and my cup is running 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.**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:19-25

A reading from 1 Peter.

Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.

¹⁹ It is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. ²¹ For 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."

²³ When 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. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (HS p. 8)

GOSPEL: John 10:1-10

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

[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. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to

them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Loving God, sent to us your Spirit this day, to strengthen us, to increase our faith, and to renew our devotion to you, your teachings, and your Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Do you remember the Disney movie “The Little Mermaid”?

Not that unpopular live-action one that came out a few years ago that I still didn’t see, but the original animated version that came out in the late 80s/early 90s. If by chance you don’t know what I’m talking about, the movie is basically about this 16-year-old mermaid named Ariel, who has this typical teenager/parent relationship with her dad, King Triton. Ariel is completely infatuated with the surface world, even sings a whole song about it where she showcases her cavern with gadgets and gizmos a-plenty, whozits and whatzits galore, and at least 20 thingamabobs that she’s collected over the years from shipwrecks and I assume floating garbage that the humans left behind. Triton, however, hates the surface world and sees humans as these dangerous, barbaric fish-eaters that pose a threat to the mer-folk way of life. Still, Ariel continues to be this a wide-eyed wonderer and, unphased by her dad’s concerns, wishes to be, as per that song title, part of that world.

As fate would have it, Ariel saves from drowning this hunky human called Prince Eric, and completely falls head over heels for him. Her dad of course finds out and in a fit of rage, destroys Ariel’s carefully curated collection of gizmos and thingamabobs. So then in an act of rebellion, Ariel goes and makes a deal with Ursula, the Sea Witch, who temporarily makes her human so she can attempt to get Prince Eric to fall in love with as well. Only, Ariel’s part in this transaction, was to give up her voice. So she somehow has to figure out how she can win the heart of that beautiful prince in order to live the life that she had dreamed of for so long.

I know, kind of sounds like a typical Disney movie, but back then to an early-pubescent kid like me when it first came out? This movie was the bee’s knees. I mean, it was peak coming-of-age movie for me as not only was it funny and had a bunch of feel-good moments which I totally dig, but it really spoke to me as a rebellious kid myself. Not to mention that it was full of these bangers, like the classic “Part of Your World” song that I already mentioned, but also the award-winning reggae-style smash, “Under the Sea,” the sultry “Kiss the Girl” ballad, and of course the humorous seafood chef anthem, “Les Poisson” (hee hee hee, haw haw haw).

All that aside though, this movie goes deeper than we often give it credit for. While it sounds superficial with the very quick romance between Ariel and Eric, it offered a lot in the way of forgiveness, redemption, and grace. Yes, this is a cartoon movie about a mermaid who wants to engage in an inter-species relationship with a human, which I’m pretty sure is illegal. But as this Canadian-born Asian kid who mostly always felt like he didn’t fit in, The Little Mermaid

gave me the groundwork to ponder who I am, wonder why I am, and maybe figure out what is it that I can do.

I think we get a bit of that from today's text out of John. As you may know, today is the 4th Sunday of Easter, which is also generally known as Good Shepherd Sunday. I'm not sure which came first, the day or the text, but every year on Good Shepherd Sunday we get a passage from John chapter 10, which describes Jesus as... you guessed it, the Good Shepherd. Or at least, some facet of his good shepherding nature.

In today's case, Jesus states that he is the gate that leads into the fold and also the gatekeeper that holds the gate open for the Good Shepherd who also Jesus, as he calls the sheep by name. Anyone who enters around the gate or over the fence is but a thief and a bandit. It's not a perfect metaphor, but we get the idea.

And sure, we might think, it makes enough sense. Listen for his voice, enter through the gate, follow the shepherd. Otherwise we're thieves and bandits, right? Easy.

Or is it?

I mean, it was confusing enough that Jesus had to explain it a second time. He reiterates that he is the gate that we enter through, but he also explains how the thieves and bandits aren't just the ones who didn't enter through the gate, but they were already present in the fold and also calling the sheep. This means that they have a voice as well.

Suddenly things got a bit more complicated. I mean, now we have to listen specifically for Jesus. We have to learn to recognise him. We have to know the difference between his voice and the voice of the pretenders who might look and act and maybe even sound like Jesus, but simply are not him.

Not exactly easy anymore.

Going back to the Little Mermaid, I mentioned that Ariel had to give up her voice to be human and try to get Eric to love her without it. But what I didn't say was that it was her voice that the hunky human already fell in love with when he heard her singing as she was saving his life, because why not? It's a Disney movie. So he was looking for that voice when he met Ariel, but since she didn't have one, he deduced that she wasn't the girl he was looking for. Then to complicate things, the Sea Witch magically used Ariel's voice to sound like her, and when Eric heard it, he recognised it as the voice he loves, and wanted to marry the Sea Witch right away. He was under a spell at the time as well, but whatever.

The point is that the voice sounded the same, but it was a different source. The voice sang the same song, but for a different reason. The voice was just as beautiful and alluring, but it gave a different message.

So how do we recognise Jesus' voice? In a world that is so competitive with who can be the loudest and most heard, how can we know who to listen to? When we are inundated with different ideals, different methods, different gates, how can we know which is the right path? When so many voices sound the same, seem to come from the same places, and even give us the same messages that we might want to hear, how can we know which is Jesus?

Well, in the movie, the hunky human was looking for the voice, yes, but we see that he was still falling for Ariel, even when she couldn't audibly communicate with him. He couldn't hear her speak, but he could see her tenderness, he could feel her warmth, and he could sense the goodness in this person, even without her saying a thing.

See, a voice isn't just audible.

But Jesus' voice can be heard in the compassion that is shown to others. It can be seen in the humble service of neighbours and allies in our city and beyond. It is felt in the warmth and love that can be shared even amongst perfect strangers.

This is Jesus' voice. Not one that promises us riches and power, but one that promotes grace and mercy. It's not a voice that forces its way in to be heard, but one that speaks volumes through charitable action and welcome. It's not a voice that demands our attention and respect, but one that invites us into community full of love and acceptance and allows us to live life abundantly.

See the gate that Jesus is talking about isn't a difficult pathway through which we must traverse to get into the kingdom. It isn't a set of goalposts through which we must score to win a prize. It isn't a bunch of rules that we have to follow to earn a reward.

Rather, the gate is a way of living. It's a way of seeing the world as through God's eyes. It's hearing, heeding, and following the voice of compassion, healing, and peace. My friends, this is the life to which we are called. This is the life that we are empowered to live. This is the life full of abundant blessing and love that speaks louder than any words.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY The Lord's My Shepherd (#778)

CREED (HS p. 11)

Together with all of God's fold, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led to recognise and listen to God's voice, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "in your shepherding mercy, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are our Shepherd and in you we have all that we could ask for or imagine, as you bless us with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us to reflect this love onto all people, that we might learn to better live lives redeemed by a Saviour. In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you provide for our needs and you strengthen our faith. May our ministry be faithful and our proclamation of your good news be effective, that your presence among us might be seen and felt by all. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered leaders, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Lutheran Church of the Cross in Victoria and their pastor Lydon Sayers; and for all the prison chaplains and their ministries across this country. In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your creation restores our souls as we gaze upon the beauty and serenity of the green pastures, the still waters, and all the wonders of everything you have made. May our care for this planet be pleasing to you, that our stewardship lead us deeper into appreciation and faith. In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, even in the face of the evils of the world, we shall not fear for we know that you watch over and comfort us. We lift in prayer all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence that we all might one day learn to live in peace in spite of difference and diversity. We also pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you anoint us with your goodness and mercy until our cups are running over, and you heal us in our times of need. Be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your loving presence and blessing be apparent to us all. Especially we pray for Kathy and family; Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Greg and Aikiko; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Pastor Carol; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Kelly; Betty; Ngan Kew (nan CUE); Matt; Patty; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you are with us all the days of our lives and you welcome us to dwell with you and all the saints in your house forever. May our faith be informed by the lives of those we've loved and lost, that we be better equipped to move toward a future full of abundant joy and life for all the world. In your shepherding mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and guidance, shown to us by Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who leads us along right pathways to experience your love and peace, joining us with the choirs of angels, hosts of heaven, and church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (HS p. 15)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy and mighty God, you are all things to all people. You lead us and guide us toward peace and righteousness, and you deliver us from the evils that harm us. And in the fullness of time, you send to us Jesus, your Son, to shepherd us into your kingdom and community with all the saints, full of your grace and forgiveness.

For on the night that he was betrayed, it was your Son Jesus who sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke, and shared it saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And after they ate he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we see you present with us, O God, affirming our position in your family, lifting us up out of isolation and loneliness, and reminding us of this the basis of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, through your Son, our Good Shepherd Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (HS p. 18)

Led together to be one body by the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,**

your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see God gathering us together to be one.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (HS p. 18)
Precious Lord, Take My Hand (#773)
Have No Fear, Little Flock (#764)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding and nourishing us with your Word and truth, and guiding us into your grace and community. Continue to lead us in our navigation of this world, that your love be reflected in all that we do and say, through Jesus our Lord and Good Shepherd. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God who calls us by name lead us to green pastures and still waters,
the God who shepherds us into community shine on you and be gracious onto you,
the God who opens for us the gate of abundant life bless you greatly and give you peace,
now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG: My Life Flows On in Endless Song (#763)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, pursued by God's goodness and mercy.
Thanks be to God.