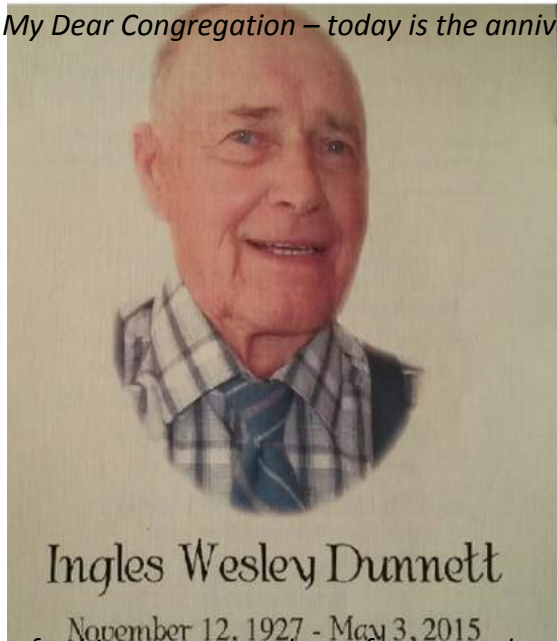


Norman Kennedy Presbyterian Church

May 3, 2020

My Dear Congregation – today is the anniversary of my father's death and as I think of him today,



November 12, 1927 - May 3, 2015

refreshing waters- a place of peace and rest – all provided for him by the Good Shepherd!

please allow me to dedicate today's service to his memory. He was a man of deep faith and commitment to Jesus Christ and was an example to me in many ways. He would enjoy the images which are part of this service – that of a shepherd and sheep – for he indeed in many ways was a shepherd to his family (and I believe to many others in his church and community), providing, guiding, helping and rescuing as needed. He certainly helped to set my feet on the right path. I miss him! How I wish you could have met him. Yet, as he envisioned his heavenly home, it was not so much a mansion or streets of gold but in his thinking, it was a more likely to be a beautiful place of green pastures, stately trees and

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH:

- Church services continue in this format.
- Remember that the reason we go to church is to worship God together in our gathering and to share faith with each other. We must continue to connect – please keep up the practice of participating with the services and call one other person this week to ask about how they are doing...
- If you have difficulties opening the links to musical accompaniment or special features, contact Taeyang (306-999-5113)- he will give you some guidance.
- We are a church that cares – we **FILLED THE FOODBANK BIN!** Our contributions will certainly make a difference. Another bin will be placed here and you can contribute any time.
- The latest from the Gov't is still 10 people per meeting – the regularly scheduled **Session meeting for May 5th** (6:30 p.m.) will happen. **A Board of Managers meeting is being called for May 19th, 6:30 p.m.** The Missions Committee will also meet in the month of May. Ladies Fellowship does not plan to meet. Men's Breakfast Fellowship – check with Parry.
- Please take note of this: the NKP website is up and active again. Here's the address: www.nkpchurchregina.ca Check it and our FB page.
- If you have a church key, PLEASE – call or come into the church office to get the code so that you can 'arm' or 'disarm' the new alarm when you come or go from the church.
- Your faithful support has been greatly appreciated. Your envelopes are arriving by mail and by being dropped off either at the church or to the Bosch's home. We will also pick up envelopes from your home, just let us know.

- On-line giving has become a NOW necessity for many churches. The Board will be considering how to make it easier for you to keep up your contributions. Please be patient with us as we try to make adjustments during the pandemic.
- Sunday School lessons and a craft are being distributed to the mailboxes of the regular Sunday School children. Thanks Sumi, for preparing and distributing these. We'd love to get drawings and colouring sheets back from the children so we can make a display at the church.
- Special music contributions are provided for our 'email' worship services. Thanks to those singing and to Sumi & Taeyang for recording these parts of our worship.
- **'Spring Basket/ Fancy Bag Contest & Auction'** – a fundraiser event ' Sunday after we return to our regular sanctuary gatherings. Be planning your contribution of a unique 'spring – themed' gift bag or basket – any size, any theme for your items...
- The SPRING edition of NEWS KNOWLEDGE PRAISE newsletter was sent by email last week. We hope you enjoyed reading it. The winners of the 'Find Ronda 'contest were: Bora Kim, Anne Schmidt & Lois Cimmeck!



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome to church at home Worship

WORDS OF GREETING:

Welcome in the name of Christ. God's grace, mercy and peace be with you
and also with you.

SONG OF PREPARATION: *'It is the cry of my heart...'*

(our Praise team has led us in this song in the past, the lyrics are included here, sing along or listen as you prepare your heart and mind to meet God in this hour of worship)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bm6Ko-Pyauo>

*It is the cry of my heart to follow you
 It is the cry of my heart to be close to you
 It is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life
 It is the cry of my heart to follow you
 It is the cry of my heart to be close to you
 It is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life
 Teach me your holy ways oh Lord
 So I can walk in your truth
 Teach me your holy ways oh Lord
 And make me wholly devoted to you*

*It is the cry of my heart to follow you
It is the cry of my heart to be close to you
It is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life
Open my eyes so I can see
The wonderful things that you do
Open my heart up more and more
And make it wholly devoted to you
It is the cry of my heart to follow you
It is the cry of my heart to be close to you
It is the cry of my heart to follow all the days of my life
It is the cry of my heart to follow you
It is the cry of my heart to be close to you
It is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life
All of the days of my life
(All of the days)
All of the days of my life
(Make me wholly devoted Lord)
All of the days of my life
All of the days of my life*

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Though the way seems long and the road rough

Yet will we trust the One who leads us.

Though the direction is unknown and we don't know the outcome

Yet will we place our lives in Christ's loving care.

It is Christ who brings us out to green pastures and restores our souls.

It is Christ who gives us hope and peace. Praise be to Christ our Lord. AMEN.

GATHERING HYMN: **#373 'Praise Him, Praise Him'**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB27OjUFZjs>

Praise Him, praise Him, Jesus our blessed Redeemer,
Sing, O earth, His wonderful; love proclaim.
Hail Him! hail Him! highest archangels in glory,
Strength and honour give to His holy name,
Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard His children,
In His arms He carries them all day long,
Praise Him, Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness

Praise Him! Praise Him! ever in joyful song.

Praise Him, praise Him, Jesus our blessed Redeemer,
For our sins He suffered and bled and died;
He, our rock, our hope of eternal salvation,
Hail Him! Hail Him! Jesus the Crucified.
Sound His praises Jesus who bore our sorrows
Love unbounded wonderful deep and strong
Praise Him, Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness,
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song.

Praise Him, praise Him Jesus our blessed Redeemer,
Heavenly portals loud with hosannas ring
Jesus, Saviour, reigneth for ever and ever,
Crown Him, crown Him,
Prophet and Priest and King!
Christ is coming, over the world victorious;
power and glory unto the Lord belong
Praise Him, Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness,
Praise Him, Praise Him! ever in joyful song!

OPENING PRAYER:

We are standing at the gate, o loving Shepherd, not sure about the journey. But you have called our names, and in your voice we hear such love and surety. Bring us safely on the journey and strengthen us that we may serve you in all that we do. AMEN.

A PSALM OF PRAISE (**unison**) Psalm 23

(If children who are school age readers, are worshipping with you this morning please have them participate in this reading. For all the adult congregation – many parts of this Psalm you will know by heart, but do you know it all? In this coming week, why not read and then recite it every day until the entire Psalm 23 is committed to your memory! This is the traditional, King James version)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth 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 thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

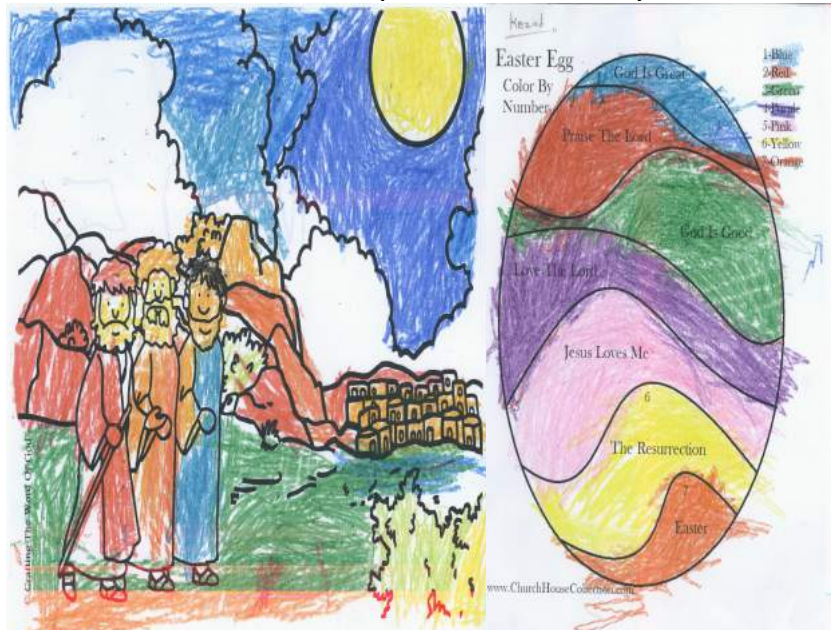
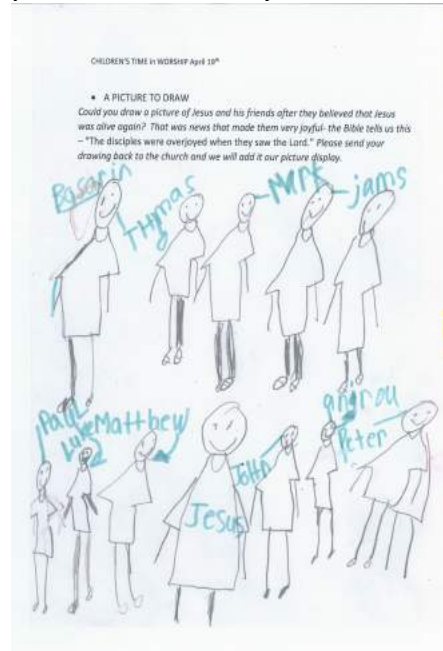
5 Thou preparast a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

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

CHILDREN'S TIME:

This week we have drawings from Moses, Amos and Keziah to show to the congregation.

Don't forget to send your colouring or art work to the church – we will print pictures in the Order of Worship each week and we will make a display with the other pictures for everyone to see when we return to worship in the sanctuary.



- **A BIBLE VERSE TO LEARN:**

Psalm 23:6

"I am sure that your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. And I will live in the house of the LORD forever."

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- Have you played the game called 'Follow the Leader'? Who do you prefer to be – the leader or the follower?
- When you are the follower, what makes it hard to 'follow'?

- Can you think of actions that the leader might do that are hard for you to follow? What about the times when the leader gives you a whole lot of instructions all at once?
- Jesus wants to be our Leader. He uses different names for Leader sometimes. Maybe it is our Guide, Our Guardian, Our Shepherd. And Jesus gives us instructions He wants us to follow. Can you think of some of those instructions?
- Someone reminded me that one of those instructions is that we should go to church to worship with all God's people – but that is a hard instruction to follow when we have a coronavirus in our world and we have been told by the Government of our land to stay home and to not have large meetings. So that's why we can't follow that instruction just now. But let's pray every day that soon we can follow Jesus again by coming to church.
- Today, with your family members, play 'Follow the Leader' and think of adding some easy instructions and then add some hard ones so we will remember that being a follower of Jesus is both easy and hard – we just have to commit to keep following!

- A PICTURE TO DRAW OR CONSTRUCT A SCENE THIS WEEK

Your parents might have to help describe this assignment - I am asking that you get your own paper and draw a picture of following Jesus. Or that you use your toys or blocks to create a scene of following Jesus. You could get an idea from the Psalm reading or you could make up your own idea of what it looks like for you to be a follower of Jesus. (If it is a drawing, send it back to the church for our display please – or if you make a scene, then take a picture and send that back to the church.)

SONG: 'His Sheep Am I' (after getting the music from this link, please click on the cc button (right hand corner of screen and the words of the song will appear / or you can follow the words from the text within the service printed here)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSsWqtkBC2Q>

1. In God's green pastures feeding by His cool waters lie;
Soft in the evening walk my Lord and I,
All the sheep of His pasture
Fare so wondrously fine; His sheep am I.
(Chorus)

Female voices: Waters cool; *Male voices:* In the valley;

Female voices: Pastures green, *Male voices:* On the mountain,

Female voices: In the evening, *Male voices:* In the evening

Everyone: Walk my Lord and I.

Female voices: Dark the night, *Male voices:* In the valley,
Female voices: Rough the way, *Male voices:* On the mountain,
Female voices: Step by step... *Male voices:* Step by step.

Everyone: My Lord and I.

(Chorus)

2. Through the streets of the city in the darkness of the night,
Far from the fold, He heard my lonely cry.
Now I sit at His table in the palace of light;
His sheep am I.

(Chorus)

3. Yes the Lord is my Shepherd and no want shall I know
He'll guide and comfort me wher'er I go
On the mountain, the valley by His hand He shall lead
His sheep am I.

(Chorus)

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds we have been healed. So let us acknowledge our failure and disobedience, and return to the Lord with penitence and faith.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Gentle Shepherd, You guide us in right paths, You lead us in the ways of righteousness, but we have allowed our anger, our rage, our greed, and at times even hate, to direct our paths. We have overreacted, we have taken more than our share, we have despised others that seem to have it all. Forgive us, God, for not following Your ways. Forgive us for not remembering that we are Your sheep, and You are our Shepherd. Forgive us when we have not listened for Your voice and instead have acted in the ways of the world. Guide us back to Your path, to loving You and loving our neighbours. Help us to unclench our fists and lend out our hands in hope and healing, forgiveness and love. In the name of Christ our Shepherd we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Even though we have wandered and have become lost, the shepherd calls to us. We can place our trust in his loving care. For we are the sheep of his pasture, blessed and given hope. **AMEN.**

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Living God, help us so to hear your Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe; and believing, we may follow your way in all faithfulness, seeking your honour and glory in all that we do. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

(online Bible resource for various translations can be found at www.biblegateway.com)

This morning the scripture lessons are read by Bob Juby. (Click on this link to hear the readings: <https://youtu.be/wLfGB6uYogI>)

The Gospel of John 10:1-10 (NIV)

“What I’m about to tell you Pharisees is true. What if someone does not enter the sheep pen through the gate but climbs in another way? That person is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own sheep, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him. They don’t recognize a stranger’s voice.” ⁶Jesus told this story. But the Pharisees didn’t understand what he was telling them.

⁷So Jesus said again, “What I’m about to tell you is true. I am like a gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers. But the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I’m like a gate. Anyone who enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out. And they will find plenty of food. ¹⁰A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they may have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.

1 Peter 2:19-25 (NIV)

¹⁹For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you

endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²²“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”^[a]

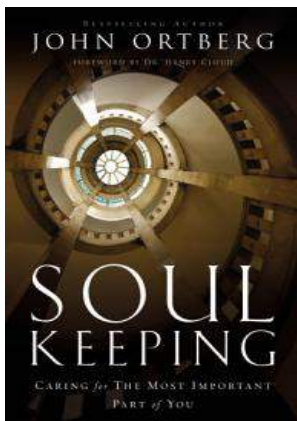
²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” ²⁵For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

SERMON: ‘Shepherd of My Soul’

My High School yearbook was titled ‘Remember When’. Even with the help of the pictures, there is much in it and quite a number of the people who I do not remember. After all it was a long time ago. But I find it strange what I do remember. Regardless of when it happened, there are



sometimes the smallest of details about something or someone that comes back to my memory. That was the case for me this week – leading up to this weekend. Five years ago, almost to the day, on a flight to New Brunswick I read a book titled ‘Soul Keeping’ by John Ortberg. My soul was disturbed, my mind was reminiscing, my heart was breaking because that flight was taking me to the deathbed of my father. And my

memories were of all the outdoor places – the Miramichi river, the brooks, the woods (in the fall hunting season especially), the pasture and other fields where I walked and talked, rode on horseback with my father. As I opened the book, I was drawn into the prologue for it was all about a stream – a clean cool refreshing stream that made its way from a high place down to the villages where people could enjoy its refreshments. The stream was under the supervision of an old man who kept it clear of debris. Until – until government officials assumed there was no need for a ‘stream-keeper’ and there was no money to continue such a role -

henceforth the stream could look after itself. However, soon the water became undrinkable, unattractive, murky and messy. And in hindsight, it was revealed that the stream indeed needed a KEEPER.

And Ortberg writes – “the stream is your soul. And you are the keeper.”

I enjoyed reading this book. I was taken in by the ‘stream’ analogy at the beginning – a stream, a brook, a river or maybe just a small branch of a river like the one near my father’s camp which has always given me pause to reflect of the meandering movements of my life – especially my soul. I was also challenged by this book and felt its content worthy of a group study. A few of the NKP congregation entered into that study with me over a 6 week period. For myself, I knew that my soul needed attention – and in our group study we focused of course on what it means to pay attention to our souls. The title ‘Soul Keeper’, the analogy, the easy to read style, the probing and prodding it did for my thinking has made this book one of my favourites. It caused me to pay attention to the needs of my soul. Ortberg said “the soul is like an inner stream of water that gives strength, direction and harmony to every area of life.” I wanted more of all 3 of those things – strength, direction and harmony.

Early in this past week, I began my study for today’s message. And I realized, despite reading a book and studying about soul keeping, that I am a very inadequate soul keeper. But moreso, I realized that I don’t even need to take on that role. That doesn’t mean I don’t have to pay attention to my soul – but, what a relief for I found that Jesus is called - **“the Shepherd and Overseer (*Keeper*) of my soul!” In other words, Jesus is offering to be my soul-keeper! And he’ll be that for you as well.**

When you come to know Jesus, trust Him, and place yourself into His loving care, you can be confident that He will shepherd, oversee, and keep you and keep your soul.

To communicate this to you and me Jesus uses shepherd and sheep imagery.

We have come to a Sunday the church still tells us is in the Easter season. The scripture passages for today point us to Jesus teaching and also Peter's commentary on why and how and for what purpose we need a Shepherd. This is a post Easter reflection because after Jesus' death, his followers certainly became like sheep without a shepherd. Over the last 2 Sundays we read about and talked about the disciples – those who loved and followed Jesus the most – but they were, since His death and even knowing about His resurrection – they were the ones hiding in fear, at loose ends, uncertain, unbelieving, unmotivated.

The Christian church began to designate this Sunday as 'Good Shepherd' Sunday for the very purpose that being reminded of Jesus' teaching and image of Himself as shepherd will strengthen us to be the church.

In today's Gospel Reading from the tenth chapter of John, Jesus alludes to the methods for herding sheep and preventing sheep rustling back in Bible times, the same way it's still done in the Bible lands today.



(This picture taken by me in Israel in February 2020)

During the daytime, the shepherds take the sheep out to graze in the countryside. A typical flock has from 20 to 500 head. The shepherd is usually a young boy, preferably a member of the family. For large flocks an older man may be the head shepherd, assisted by children as under-

shepherds.

The shepherd's job description is best described as we read about it in Psalm 23. With the help of a sheepdog (often) he leads the sheep to good pasture, protects them from predators and rustlers, guides them to water, looks after their hurts and wounds, and, most important, keeps any of the sheep from wandering and straying from the flock. In using Psalm 23 and also Isaiah's commentary that sheep are prone to wander and to stray away – and especially Isaiah's phrase "all we like sheep" – well we then often have the full list of all the ways we are like those dumb animals. Describing sheep and reminding people that **we are all like sheep** is a fun thing to do for preachers -it's how we get our jabs in - and so we draw attention to those sheep descriptors like dumb, witless, unsuspecting, powerless, directionless, passive, straying, - yet our thoughts about lambs is entirely different. They are soft, pure, innocent, sweet, meek, clean, gentle. But since I have no real-life experiences with sheep or lambs – and I don't think many of us do - it's probably best that we be cautious about our labels.

Although, in searching out descriptions I did find this *"Sheep may be dumb, but they are valued. Traders value sheep for clothing, diners eat them for gourmet and pilgrims offer them for sacrifice. Mutton comes from sheep about three years old raised in the open country; rack of lamb comes from lambs under a year old - best reared under shelter; and sheep milk generally costs 3-4 times the price of cow milk. Today people have been known to clone them, raise them like children and even use them ingeniously in the country to cut grass, devour weeds and control brush."* So there you have it – sheep are definitely worth much more than we may have thought.

And in that consideration, when Jesus used the sheep analogy – we can be confident that we who are called 'the sheep of his pasture' –well - we are indeed valuable in God's sight! So valuable that a good shepherd will lay down his life for the sheep. Yes, that means a shepherd, any ordinary shepherd, he or she will die to protect and provide for their sheep.

And that is exactly what the Easter season tells us. That is why the Church draws us to this passage. We have been given a **Good Shepherd** – Jesus came to be the One who would love us so much – we who are and have been undeserving, misguided, reckless, stubborn – yet Jesus our Good Shepherd sought for us, rescued us, provided for us, and saved us by laying down His life for us. Jesus, our Good Shepherd gave us a secure place within the fold of God. That’s why Peter writes – *“You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

The ‘Shepherd’ image of Jesus and us as ‘his sheep’ is so rich in its depth and meaning. It is possibly the most written about in poetry and song lyrics – if there are only a few Christian hymns that are still common in the secular world at times of crisis and death, ***‘The Lord’s My Shepherd’*** is one of them.



If there is an image from the Bible that we convey to our children, it is the most often a picture of Jesus with a little lamb in his arms. Here at NKP, we call our youngest Sunday School program ‘Little Lambs’. Many artists have provided a rendition of this image. As comforting as that image is, another artist has given a rendition more suited to most of us as adults.



It is a more rugged scene which depicts the shepherd with the weight of an adult sheep on his shoulders. The approximate weight might be 125-130 lbs. In this 2nd print it is also notable that the shepherd has a scarf around his head and neck to reduce the discomfort of bearing a hot, filthy and heavy sheep on his back for the long journey home. A shepherd wrote this about sheep: “Sheep are sticky with lanolin, smelly, loaded with

dirt.” Could that be us in our lost, sinful state?

Yes, our Good Shepherd values us, rescues us, carries us, saves us – even when we have been ‘loaded with dirt’ (i.e. sin)!

Jesus was a master teacher. In living with the disciples, talking with them, teaching them, showing them and those who gathered on hillsides and seashores and it was these illustrations and lessons which would come back to their memories as his followers struggled to make sense of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

The second reading today was from Peter – Peter as we know him from the Gospels tended to be difficult and impulsive despite being passionate and mostly faithful. Peter who denied his Lord one day and 2 days later could not run fast enough to be the first to see an empty tomb. Peter who regretted and repented and was restored and reaffirmed by Jesus on the seashore post- resurrection. To Peter, Jesus used shepherd language – shepherd language with the former fisherman even as he sat on the seashore with him eating fish. And Jesus said to Peter - “Feed my lambs”; “tend my sheep”; “feed my sheep”.

So, this same Peter, in his letter to the early churches, and to us, reminds us that we have needed and always will need a ‘Shepherd and Overseer’ (or in some translations ‘a Bishop’) of our soul. What does that mean?

I believe this means not only do we have a Good Shepherd who sought us, found us, rescued us, saved us, placed us securely in the fold of God’s people. But we also have in Jesus an Overseer (another name is ‘bishop’ meaning one who guards) and so Jesus continues to direct us to live out this Gospel as worship and witness to such great salvation that has been ours since we first believed. A truly a soul-keeping kind of job.

This is the soul-keeper I need. The One who reminds me that I am His forever, the One who satisfies my thirst from the stream of His Word, the One who keeps me, guards me, fills me, restores me.

And for that, all I can now say is...

Bless the Lord O my Soul and may I never forget all His benefits!

He keeps my soul! He will keep yours also!

Thanks be to God. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION

SONG OF RESPONSE: *'Shepherd of My Soul'*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtqliuDZIKA>

Shepherd of my soul I give You full control
Wherever You may lead I will follow
I have made the choice to listen for Your voice
Wherever You may lead I will go

Shepherd of my soul I give You full control
Wherever You may lead I will follow
I have made the choice to listen for Your voice
Wherever You may lead I will go

Be it in a quiet pasture or by a gentle breeze
The shepherd of my soul is by my side
Should I face a mighty mountain or a valley dark and deep
The shepherd of my soul will be my guide

INVITATION & PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

(Dear Congregation –The bounty of God’s grace has blessed us in so many ways. God’s love was manifested in the ultimate gift of Jesus, who is the Christ. Let us demonstrate our love through the sharing of our of time, talent, and finances that God may be glorified.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFQ_H4c8WW0

Doxology: *(Traditional ‘Praise God’ music..., these words:)*

Let trumpets sound and voices sing!

Let all on earth their praises bring!

For Christ has conquered sin and death

And given life eternal breath. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication:

Heavenly Father, we seek to be the sheep of your holy pasture. As we dedicate these offerings, help us to examine carefully the deepest recesses of our own hearts. Guide our ways so that we may share abundantly your love and your

compassion with those seeking your pasture. We pray in the name of the Risen One. **Amen.**

Special Music Presentation

Hymn: *'There were Ninety and Nine'* (by Del Morris & Taeyang No)

<https://youtu.be/gmIXdO6yfrU>

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the flock,
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off in the cold and dark;
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

2

"Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for Thee?"
But the Shepherd made answer: "This of Mine
Has wandered away from Me;
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find My sheep."

3

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night which the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Out in the bleak desert He heard its cry—
All bleeding and helpless, and ready to die.

4

"Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way
That mark out the mountain's track?"
"They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."
"Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?"
"They're pierced tonight by many a thorn."

5

And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found My sheep!"

And the angels echoed around the throne,
“Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!”

PRAYERS of the People and the Lord’s Prayer:

Dear Jesus, we confess that we have had times of wandering away – away from you, away from the scriptures, away from fellowship with each other. We have done so and probably thought no one noticed. But You did – you notice when we stray and your heart breaks. You, O God, time and time again seek for us, find us, forgive us, heal us, and tell us again and again how much you love us. Shepherd of our souls we thank you, praise you, and commit ourselves again to come under your care and guidance. That care is often provided as we care and share with each – when we have pastors and friends who remind us, encourage us, prod and poke us until we return to the fold and enjoy the safety and nourishment it provides. Heavenly Father bring to our memory this day those who have shepherded us – and we give you thanks for them. Thank you for those who have been guardians and overseers to us in our faith journeys. May we each in a moment of silence offer thanks for those who have ‘shepherded’ us... *(silence – 30 seconds)*

The sheep-fold (that being the church) of our current time feels empty when we are not with each other. We are ‘herd’ creatures – we are meant to be with each – you created us to be community and family with each other. In the efforts to control and prevent a virus which can kill, we have all become individuals shutting out the world. Lord Jesus, show us another way even as we exercise the needed cautions – we thank you for technology that gives ways of connecting. We thank you for the creativity we see when people post messages and pictures in their windows, when people stand apart but offer words of greeting and strength, when people wave, when people use their phones to hear another’s voice, when people deliver food or necessities door to door or to places in great need like shelters or the Food Bank, when people make masks and offer them free of charge, when people keep a positive spirit and smile... Help us to continue to reach out in such ways. We pray also today for those who are guiding our country, our province through this epidemic. We pray that as information is gathered, as policies are set and plans made that wisdom would be evident – that confidence would replace fear – that lessons learned and habits formed during the the Covid crisis will become a more thoughtful and careful way to live – that appreciation of those who have always provided medical and health care support would become the norm – that neighbourliness seen now would continue – that faith, a return to faith, a recognition that people need the Lord would be instilled in us – that prayers for

health and safety – for ourselves, for our world would be always on our lips. Lord God, there seems to be much to learn in these days, may we have ears to hear, and hearts to believe. Be pleased O God to hear these our prayers which we bring to you this day – and with this prayer as we were taught by our Lord Jesus -

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

THE PARTING HYMN: # 699 '*All the way my Saviour Leads Me*'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnEZYfzkJgs>

*All the way my Savior leads me
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy?
Who through life has been my guide
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort
Here by faith in Him to dwell
For I know whate'er befall me
Jesus doeth all things well*

*All the way my Savior leads me
Cheers each winding path I tread
Gives me grace for every trial
Feeds me with the living bread
Though my weary steps may falter
And my soul a-thirst may be
Gushing from the rock before me
Lo! a spring joy I see*

*All the way my Savior leads me
O the fullness of His love!*

*Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father's house above
When my spirit, clothed immortal
Wings its flight to realms of day
This my song through endless ages
Jesus led me all the way.*

GOD SENDS US . . .

COMMISSIONING:

Go now with your trust in the good shepherd,
and let us love, not just in words,
but in truth and action.

Believe in the name of Jesus Christ,
and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

**BENEDICTION: Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

***GOING OUT SONG: # 641 'One more step along the world I go'**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PXV3dwaeNU>

One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go;
From the old things to the new
Keep me traveling along with you
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me traveling along with you.
Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn;
And the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me traveling along with you.
As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me traveling the way I should;
Where I see no way to go
You'll be telling me the way, I know
And it's from the old I travel to the new;

Keep me traveling along with you.
Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough;
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me traveling along with you
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me traveling along with you.
You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me;
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me traveling along with you
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me traveling along with you.

ANOTHER MESSAGE:

You may be thinking that your Pastor is taking liberties to write in 'extra' stuff and it will be better when we get back to Sunday worship in the sanctuary and with the proper decorum for then these extras would not be included! Because (believe it or not) your Pastor does try to keep an eye on the time!

However, in this format it is easier to go on and on and on... but what I provide, I do so with the prayer that you each find something of encouragement.

What I now attach came to my attention on Friday after other parts of the service were all planned.

Since the Pandemic hit, a Christian musical artist from Winnipeg, Steve Bell, has been offering 'virtual live' concerts each Friday. These have been a source

of my encouragement during this crisis. I have been watching those mini concerts.

I just have to include this song today – it is not for congregational singing but it sums up today's theme. Listen if you choose to – be encouraged by its message and Steve's voice even as you are often encouraged in other renditions and versions and readings of Psalm 23 and the image of God as the Shepherd and Guardian of your soul.



Shepherd of Life – Steve Bell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNBpJHkjD9w&feature=youtu.be>

The Lord of life is my shepherd
He leads me with nothing to want
And He leads me along
With His staff and His rod
He is here to comfort my fears

Though I walk through the valley
I walk with His hand in mine
Thought I passed my last breath
In the shadow of death
But I'm still here
Safe on the other side

Here with the waters beside
Cool in the grasses I lie
Here with my Lord
Who gently restores
The Shepherd of Life

There's a table laid out before me
There's a cup in which joy overflows
Surely goodness and love
Will follow me all of the days
All the days of my life

See you next week!

(if children wish (or adults), here's another colouring page)

