

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
April 25, 2021 Fourth Sunday of the Easter Season
“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship: Psalm 135.1-3

“Praise the Lord! Praise the name of the Lord; give praise, O servants of the Lord, you that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for he is gracious.”

Opening Prayer Faithful God, you call to us across the span of time. Open our minds, we pray, that we may discern your call, even as you name us anew. Grant us hope against hope, that we may trust your guidance and walk in your ways. Raise us up to newness of life, that we may be children of your promise, people of your covenant, and disciples who follow wherever our Good Shepherd will lead. Amen.

Scripture Reading “*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*” Read Psalm 23

Prayer of Confession Author of life everlasting, remind us once more, we pray, that your good news carries more than the hope of your blessing in our lives; it carries the expectation that we will amend our ways. It is not enough to praise you with our lips; we must also love you with our actions: by sharing our wealth, by showing mercy to the needy, and by protecting the weak and defenseless. In these things you are praised. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession Offer the confessions of your heart to God in these quiet moments.

Words of Assurance God desires that all may live in fullness of

life. When our sins are confessed, God comforts us. God longs for all people to come to repentance, that they may see the glory of God revealed in our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

Scripture Reading “*And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another.*” Read I John 3.16-24

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer Please spend a few moments remembering those who are on our prayer list and the joys and concerns you bring to God today.

An Easter Season Prayer Shepherding God, keep us in your fold, we pray. Lead us beside the still waters and restore our souls. Help us see the way we should go, the way we should live. May we find true life as we join with others in praising your name, in celebrating your goodness, and in sharing your love for all people. May your goodness and mercy follow us throughout our days as disciples for the Risen Christ. Hear us now as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us... **The Lord’s Prayer**

Scripture Reading “*I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me...*” Read John 10.11-18

Meditation “*... he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.*” With that matter of fact statement, our reading from I John begins. Scholars believe that this epistle, not written in the style of the other Biblical letters in the New Testament, was written by the same John who wrote the gospel by that name. It’s no wonder then that this epistle focuses on the themes of love and fellowship with God; John was big on living in community as believers in the Risen Christ.....which brings us back to the opening sentence of today’s reading.

In remembering the sacrifice of Jesus for each of us, John

totally believed that we should sacrifice for one another, or, to use his words, lay down our lives for one another. In other words, we are called – after the example of Jesus – to put others before ourselves, to help others with our resources (monetary and material) as well as our time and prayer wherever needed.

What John is telling us sometimes feels contrary to the messages we receive from our culture today. What society values is individualism, competition, materialism, and consumption. We also tend to think of religion as personal, as being a private matter. What the church is called to be and do couldn't be further from that; the church is not just a collection of individuals but a community, the Body of Christ called to share God's love and grace with those all around us.

Sometimes it takes a monumental event to remind our modern-day society of the responsibility we all share in caring for one another and perhaps the passing of George Floyd last year was just that event. This tragedy spurred not just words but important actions toward more inclusivity for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) individuals. When we all do our part to build a beloved community, remembering that we are all created in the holy image of our God, then we do more than just talk about laying down our lives for each other; we actually do so as we share all that we are and all that we have with one another. That's what Jesus asks of us.

Figuring out how to live out that calling to sacrifice for one another requires that we pay attention – to one another! It's so easy to say we're too busy but, the fact is, we are each given twenty-four hours in each day. How will you spend your time to lay down your life for someone else after the example of Jesus who did just that for each of us?

Words of Benediction Creator God, fill me with your peace and create within me a heart full of your love and grace. Lift my eyes to you, O Lord, knowing that you who sent Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, for the salvation of the world, keeps my going out and my coming in forevermore. Amen.



Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.