



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026
ESTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
“Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known
through Faith, Hope and Love”**

Introduction

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.

PRELUDE

BELL

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Bode Wagner

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Please stand as you are able

***CALL TO WORSHIP - Logan Arvidson**

L: Jesus calls us to worship.

C: **We know his voice.**

L: Jesus calls us to worship.

C: **We respond with joy.**

L: Jesus calls us to worship.

C: **We will follow where he leads.**

***THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM - Presley Bosl**

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the leader begins.

L: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

L: Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne
and to the Lamb! **Amen.**

L: Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the leader continues.

L: Merciful God,
you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come.
You lead us beside still waters.
We thank you for the waters of creation:
morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.
We thank you for the waters that nourish us.
Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

L: Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness
who accompanies us on our journeys.
We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection.
We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow.
Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

L: Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows.
Break down barriers that divide us.
Fill us with the breath of peace.
Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

L: Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism,
and for making us a new creation.
We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise,
now and forever. **Amen.**

***GATHERING HYMN: "Still Waters – Psalm 23"**

**Great Aunt Maurine said at a hundred and three
Write scripture on your heart for when you need it
'Cause anxiety hates Psalm 23
So just say it to yourself 'til you believe it
And I'm feeling like I'm needing it right now**

**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want
He leads me by still waters 'til my fears are gone
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
Oh, I know You are with me, my Father, my friend
Your goodness and mercy will follow me all of my days**

I know by Your still waters, I'm safe

**Lord, I believe You can set me at ease
Turn this broken piece in me to peace and quiet
I know there's power in Your word
So I'll say it over and over 'til my soul's reminded**

**Oh, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want
He leads me by still waters 'til my fears are gone
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
Oh, I know You are with me, my Father, my friend
Your goodness and mercy will follow me all of my days
I know by Your still waters, I'm safe**

**Still waters run through any valley I could find
I'm laying fear down here at Heaven's riverside
Your word has been true in every season of my life
I believe, yes, I believe
still waters run through any valley I could find
I'm laying fear down here at Heaven's riverside
Your word has been true in every season of my life
I believe, yes, I believe**

**Oh, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want
He leads me by still waters 'til my fears are gone
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
Oh, I know You are with me, my Father, my friend
Your goodness and mercy will follow me all of my days
I know by Your still waters I'm safe**

Source: [Musixmatch](#); Songwriters: Justin Richards / Leanna Crawford / Jonathan Gamble; Still Waters (Psalm 23) lyrics © Capitol Cmg Paragon, Be Essential Songs, Jonathan Conrad Gamble Publ., Songs Of Spirit li Nashville, Spiritvault Songs li, 2 Mix Music Amplitude, Jonathan Conrad Gamble Publishing

***GREETING – Jaxson Bosl**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
C: And also with you.

***SONG OF PRAISE – “Have No Fear, Little Flock” (ELW 764)**

**1 Have no fear, little flock;
have no fear, little flock,**

for the Father has chosen to give you the kingdom;
have no fear, little flock!

2 Have good cheer, little flock;
have good cheer, little flock,
for the Father will keep you in his love forever; chosen to give you the kingdom;
have good cheer, little flock!

3 Praise the Lord high above;
praise the Lord high above,
for he stoops down to heal you, uplift and restore you;
praise the Lord high above!

4 Thankful hearts raise to God;
thankful hearts raise to God,
for he stays close beside you, in all things works with you;
thankful hearts raise to God!

Text: Luke 12:32, st. 1; Marjorie Jilson, b. 1931, sts. 2-4
Text © 1973 Concordia Publishing House

***PRAYER OF THE DAY – Jaxson Bosl**

L: Let us pray. O God our shepherd,

C: **You know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Please be seated

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

FIRST READING: ACTS 2:42-47 – Bri Skoglund

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. Here ends the reading.

PSALM 23 - Elliott Arvidson ~ Congregation reads the bold

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not ¹ 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 ¹ 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 – Mya Holmquist

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. Here ends the reading.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: “Sanctuary”

Lord prepare me.

**To be a sanctuary.
Pure and holy,
tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living,
sanctuary, for you.**

GOSPEL READING: JOHN 10:1-10 – Bode Wagner

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 word of the Lord... **Thanks be to God!**

SKIT – Presley Bosl, Cora Schlosser, Bri Skoglund, Mya Holmquist, Reid Gardner

CHILDREN’S TIME – Presley Bosl & Cora Schlosser

SERMON – Jewel Townsend

HYMN OF THE DAY: “My Shepherd, You Supply My Need” (ELW 782)

**1 My Shepherd, you supply my need;
most holy is your name.
In pastures fresh you make me feed,
beside the living stream.
You bring my wand'ring spirit back
when I forsake your ways,
and lead me, for your mercy's sake,
in paths of truth and grace.**

2 When I walk through the shades of death,
your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes,
does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows,
your oil anoints my head.

3 The sure provisions of my God
attend me all my days;
oh, may your house be my abode
and all my work be praise.
Here would I find a settled rest,
while others go and come;
no more a stranger or a guest,
but like a child at home.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt., based on Psalm 23

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – Reid Gardner

L: With hope in your promised redemption, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

L: Guiding God, your voice is gentle, familiar, and trustworthy. Bid us to follow boldly wherever you may lead us. God of mercy and grace,

C: We lift our prayers to you.

L: You love all that you have made and long for us to tend it as carefully as you would yourself. Endow us with your careful, gentle spirit for the work of stewardship with which you entrusted us at creation. God of mercy and grace,

C: We lift our prayers to you.

L: Make those in positions of power and influence to lead with a spirit of loving service, that the needs of those they represent might be met. God of mercy and grace,

C: We lift our prayers to you.

L: You restore our souls and anoint our heads with healing oil. Bring all those who long for relief into your secure pasture, and into the wholeness of your family, especially Jerry, Kristy, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Ricky, Sara, Chris, Cheryl, Bruce, Dale, Gary, Shirley, Bev, Joyce, Allison, Cadence, Becky, Kim, and Kathy. God of mercy and grace,

C: We lift our prayers to you.

- L: God, nothing can separate us from you. Not predators, nor dangers, nor death itself. As we remember our own mortality this day, we do so in the sure promise of your ultimate resurrection. God of mercy and grace,
- C: We lift our prayers to you.**
- L: Blessed are those who dwell in your house forever, O God. Draw all your saints together, both living and resurrected, into one great fold, where we hear and know your voice, and where no threat of danger may harm us. God of mercy and grace,
- C: We lift our prayers to you.**
- L: Into your hands we place our prayers, spoken and unspoken, and entrust all things to your eternal care. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Please stand as you are able

***APOSTLES' CREED – Cora Schlosser**

(ELW pg. 217)

L: Let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' 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**

***SHARING OF THE PEACE – Cora Schlosser**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

L: Share a sign of peace with those around you.

Please be seated

OFFERING

We thank you for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in our communities and the world.

OFFERING HYMN: "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds" vs 3 (ELW 367)

**3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with dauntless love;
set heart and will on things above
that we conquer through your triumph;
grant grace sufficient for life's day
that by our lives we truly say:
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

Please stand as you are able

***THE OFFERING PRAYER – Cora Schlosser**

L: Let us pray. Merciful God,

C: **Accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Use these gifts so that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus, Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER – Cora Schlosser *spoken

L: Please join me in the prayer our Lord taught us.

**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.

Litany – Laney Steidl

L: Jesus is our good shepherd, we have all we need.

C: Help us to recognize your voice, O God.

L: Our good shepherd restores our soul.

C: Help us bring restoration to a world in pain.

L: Our good shepherd prepares a table before us.

C: Help us to love our enemies and dine gladly with them.

L: Our good shepherd gives goodness and mercy all the days of our lives.

C: Help us live in gratitude for the sake of all that God has made.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to our neighbor in need

***BLESSING – Laney Steidl**

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May this face shine on you with grace and mercy.

May he look upon you with favor and give you peace.

In the name of the Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit.

***THREE-FOLD AMEN**

***SENDING HYMN: “Hallelujah! We Sing Praises” (ELW 535)**

Refrain

Hallelujah! We sing your praises,
all our hearts are filled with gladness.

Hallelujah! We sing your praises,
all our hearts are filled with gladness.

1 Christ the Lord to us said:
I am wine, I am bread,
I am wine, I am bread,
give to all who thirst and hunger. *Refrain*

2 Now he sends us all out,
strong in faith, free of doubt,
strong in faith, free of doubt.
Tell to all the joyful gospel. *Refrain*

Text: South African, tr. *Freedom Is Coming*, 1984

English text © 1984 Utryck, admin. Walton Music Corp

***DISMISSAL – Laney Steidl**

P: Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

C: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson

Chris & Bruce Carter

Kristy Fyhrie

Larry Sather

Joan Burquest

Dennis Rosenquist

Lois Rosenquist

Ricky Hart

Sara Skoglund

Cheryl Farber – mother of Melissa Schlosser

Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner

Dale Flemming – father of Laurie Ratajesak

Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Bev Lorine – mother of Mandy Arvidson
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Allison Dotzler – friend of Kathy Mittag
Cadence Smith – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Becky Yttrie – friend of the Townsends
Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Kathy Wilkins – friend of the Thoms
Family and Friends of: Sarah Pomeranz, David Anderson, Katie Jahnke, Colleen Burquest, Doug Tvedt, Alma Robinson, Jerry Pogose, Terry Burns, and Wayne Lund

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Sunday, April 26 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Sunday Fellowship Before & after Worship
9 am – Sunday School – last day for the school year!
10 am – Worship led by the Confirmation Students
11 am – VBS Planning Meeting
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

Monday, April 27

6:30 pm- Caring Ministry at Dick & Luella Thom's home

Wednesday, April 29

6 pm – Confirmation Meal served by Council
6:30 pm – Ditch Cleaning Service Project - Confirmation Class, families, mentors, Council

Sunday, May 3 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sunday Fellowship Before & after Worship
10 am – Worship w/Holy Communion led by SAM Jewel Townsend
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

NEWS AND NOTES

Today is the last day of Sunday School for the school year! Thank you to all of the students for making this a fun year! Thank you to the parents and grandparents for bringing your children to Sunday School! Thank you to the teachers for their dedication in teaching our young people about Jesus and planting seeds of faith!

VBS Planning Meeting will be held today following worship. All are welcome!

Esther Caring Ministry has packaged meals available in the kitchen freezer for you to take to anyone who could use a meal to nurture their body and spirit.

If you would like to donate a meal, please:

- Place the meal in an airtight, freezer-safe container
- Label the meal with its name and any major allergens
- Include the date the meal was prepared and frozen
- Provide cooking instructions (whether it needs to be fully cooked, for how long and at what temp, or just needs to be thawed and reheated)

Meals will be kept in the freezer for no more than three months, so please place newer items toward the bottom to help with rotation.

Esther Caring Ministry meets Monday, April 27, 6:30 pm at Dick and Luella Thom's home. ALL are invited to attend!

Join in the fun and wear a fancy or funny hat to worship on Sunday, May 3, to celebrate the Kentucky Derby!

Women's Night Out will be on Monday, May 11. More info to come!

Day of Caring sponsored by Parkers Prairie High School Student Council is on Friday, May 22. The students of PPHS will be ready, willing, and able to help out in the community. If you would like help with spring clean up or have a special project that needs to get done in the Parkers Prairie, Urbank, and Miliona area, contact PPHS Student Council Advisor David O'Brien at dobrien@pp.k12.mn.us.

The Gift of Planning event will be held on Tuesday, June 9, at 6 pm at Esther. Join us for an evening of food, fellowship and thoughtful conversation about planning for the future and giving the ultimate gift to yourself and loved ones – peace of mind. We'll be grilling burgers and brats, so bring a dish to share as we gather for a meaningful and informative night.

What to expect:

- Representatives from Lind Family Funeral Home will guide us through some end-of-life planning.
- Jewel Townsend will share a Funeral Planning guide you can take home and complete, helping you document your wishes and personal story for loved ones
- Christy Hart will offer practical tips for organizing financial and vital information, making it easier to access and understand both now and in the future.
- The Cemetery Board will have information available about costs and availability of plots.

What a Mess! VBS at Esther will be held June 14-18, starting each evening with supper at 5:30 pm, followed by lessons, music, crafts, and worship from 6-8 pm. Sign up sheets for participants and volunteers are on the narthex table. For more information contact the church office at secretary@estherlutheran.net. Be sure to invite friends, grandkids, cousins, and neighbors to join in the fun!

Note from the Council: Looking for donations of flowers for the graves. Also, if anyone is interested, please make up some wooden cross stakes for the flowers. We need to replace many of the ones we have. Any questions, please ask any member of the Council.

You belong here. We believe that each person has unique gifts, are created in God's image, and is a beloved child of God. We welcome you to join us each week to share in the community of faith at Esther - "Knowing Christ - making Christ known through faith, hope and love". If you would like to become a member of Esther, please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com

Check out the Esther Calendar on our website to stay up to date on everything happening! Go to: estherlutheran.com and click on "Esther Calendar."

Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA

"Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known through Faith, Hope and Love"

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