

Sebastopol United Methodist Church

Sunday, April 25, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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Seasonal Theme:

Alive and out of the grave, the Risen Christ is witnessed in the real world.

Theme for the Day:

Our security and unity in the Christ whom we follow as our Good Shepherd.

Call to Worship:

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: The Lord Jesus Christ is our Shepherd.

People: **He lays down his life for his sheep.**

Pastor: The Lord Jesus Christ is our Shepherd.

People: **He knows us and we belong to Him.**

Pastor: The Lord Jesus Christ is our Shepherd.

Unison: **He speaks and we listen to his voice. Amen.**

Centering and Prayer of Illumination:

(please read along with Pastor Lunisi, aloud or silently as you prefer)

We are your people, O God, the sheep of your pasture, the flock you have gathered. Lead us beside the still waters, teach us the way of righteousness, and feed us at your table. Help us to listen for your voice and follow in your path all the days of our lives. In Jesus we pray, Amen.

Readings from Scripture: **1 John 3:16-24** **Acts 4:5-12** **John 10:11-18**

Message: **BEING VIRTUOUS AS THE PRIVILEGED FLOCK OF GOD!**

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:

With thanksgiving for God's gifts to us, let us offer ourselves and the fruits of our labor for God's work in the world. Thank you for continuing to send your offerings and pledges by mail.

(please read along with Pastor Lunisi, aloud or silently as you prefer)

Gracious God, we give thanks that you have shown us the meaning of love through Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us. Show us how to share Christ's love by giving our lives for one another, to the glory of your holy name. We pray: Amen.

Blessing and Benediction:

May we abide in our Good Shepherd, the One who was raised from dead, who laid down his life for us so that we may be an extension of the Good Shepherd. Let us love one another, just as he loved us.

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Scripture Readings – April 25, 2021

first reading – 1 JOHN 3:16-24

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his

commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

second 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.”

third 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.”

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Thank you for joining us in worship today.

SEBASTOPOL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
500 North Main Street, Sebastopol CA 95472 sebumc.org