

APRIL 21, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



The Good Shepherd comes with power to love.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 10:11-18	The Good Shepherd
Monday	Acts 4:5-12	Peter and John before the council
Tuesday	1 John 3:16-24	Love one another
Wednesday	Luke 15:1-7	Parable of the lost sheep
Thursday	Ezekiel 34:11-16	God, the true shepherd
Friday	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	The resurrection of Christ
Saturday	Psalms 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Sunday	John 15:1-8	Jesus the true vine

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Shepherding God, we thank you that your care for us is never ending and filled with your abundant goodness and mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear Jesus, just as you are with us and protect us each day like a good shepherd, we thank you for feeding us with this food, a sign of your abundant love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God in Jesus, the Good Shepherd, give you comfort and peace.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
Shepherd Me, O God



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Talk or think about a time you experienced fear or anxiety.
- How does Jesus, the Good Shepherd, comfort and protect you during fearful times?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 10:11-18.

The focus in John 10 on being the good shepherd is directly related to Jesus healing the man born blind in John 9. The man born blind was cast out of the synagogue, out of the religious community, out of a protective sheepfold. Jesus as the good shepherd knows us and loves us enough to lay down his life for us. Jesus does not abandon us or cast us out. Unlike the disinterest of a hired hand who runs away when our needs are the greatest, Jesus cares for us as those who need the protection of a shepherd. This is the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has power and he uses that power to care for us and to give us the abundant life, the life overflowing with goodness (John 10:10). All of this power to love, to give us life overflowing with goodness and abundance, comes not from the abusive power of Pharisees, synagogues, or any disinterested individuals or institutions, but from the divine. This is the command that Jesus has received from God and passes on to us, the command to love sacrificially.

Discuss: When has your life been blessed by the sacrificial love of another?

Pray: **Loving God, help us to know that we are not abandoned in our time of need, but blessed with overflowing love through the power and grace of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you give sacrificially to someone in need?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. Both readings from John 10 and Psalm 23 follow the theme of shepherd. Draw the shape of a sheep on a sheet of paper. Write Jesus in the center of the shape and then words you would use to describe a good shepherd. Think or talk about what the words you wrote mean to you. Finish with prayer using the words from Psalm 23:6 as a reminder of God's comfort: **You, LORD, are my shepherd. I will never be in need. Your kindness and love will always be with me each day of my life, and I will live forever in your house, LORD. Amen.** (CEV)



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