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**Fourth Sunday of Easter April 21, 2024 Video**

*Good morning. This is Richfield Lutheran Church’s video worship service for April 21, the Fourth Sunday of Easter. I’m Pastor Brian, with me are Paul on the organ and Mary as our vocalist. The printed bulletin for this service can be found on our website, Richfield-Lutheran.org.*

*Our gospel is John 10:11-18. The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd’s willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love.*

1. **GATHERING**

**Prelude**

**Easter Procession**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**Gathering Hymn** *The Lord’s My Shepherd*  **# 778, vv 1-2**

1 The Lord's my shepherd; I'll not want.

 he makes me down to lie

 in pastures green; he leadeth me

 the quiet waters by.

 He leadeth me, he leadeth me

 the quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again,

 and me to walk doth make

 within the paths of righteousness,

 e'en for his own name's sake;

 within the paths of righteousness,

 e'en for his own name's sake.

**Greeting and Prayer of the Day**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

**O Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.** **Amen.**

1. **WORD**

**Gospel: John 10:11-18** *(*In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.*)*

The holy gospel according to John, the 10th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said: 11“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12The 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.  13The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.  14I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.  16I 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.  17For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.  18No 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon** *The Bestest Shepherd Ever* Pr Brian

**Hymn of the Day** *Shepherd Me, O God* **# 780, vv 1-2**

*Refrain*

Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants,

beyond my fears, from death into life.

1 God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,

I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,

I walk by the quiet waters of peace. *Refrain*

2 Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,

 you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,

 my spirit shall sing the music of your name. *Refrain*

**Prayers of the People**

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen, and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

*(A brief silence.)*

Shepherding God, gather your church whenever we wander from you and one another. Empower our church in ministries around the world to worship and serve alongside global companions as equal partners and coworkers in the gospel. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, preserve the health of biomes and ecosystems. Inspire scientists, researchers, conservation organizations, and all people entrusted with the task of caring for creation, that we may be better stewards of the world around us. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, lead nations and communities to share resources, cooperate in solving conflicts, and listen to the wisdom of Indigenous peoples. Help all those with power to share it and to use such power for good. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Loving God, protect the very young and the very old, those living without housing, victims of domestic abuse, and all who live with chronic illness or compromised immune systems. Guide communities to actively care for people who are vulnerable. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, help this and all communities of faith to listen for your voice. Call us away from things that distract us from following you. Invite us to more deeply love and serve people who are lonely, isolated, and on the margins. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*(A brief silence.)*

Living God, we give thanks for our ancestors in faith…. Strengthen us to share the good news in our own day. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

**Amen.**

**III. THANKSGIVING**

**Offering**

*You can support this and other of God’s ministries through Richfield Lutheran Church today via our website: Richfield-Lutheran.org/give. Thank you for your faithful generosity.*

**Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

**IV. SENDING**

*On April 21, in addition to this video recording and its phone-in option, we have in-person worship at 9:30. We celebrate Holy Communion. Afterwards share fellowship. All are welcome.*

*Next Sunday, April 28, is the Fifth Sunday of Easter, our gospel reading is John 15:1-8.* On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.

*Until then, go forth with God’s blessing.*

**Blessing**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope ☩ bless you now and always.

**Amen.**

**Sending Hymn** *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* **# 502, vv 1-2**

1 The King of love my shepherd is,

 whose goodness faileth never;

 I nothing lack if I am his

 and he is mine forever.

2 Where streams of living water flow,

 my ransomed soul he leadeth

 and, where the verdant pastures grow,

 with food celestial feedeth.

**Dismissal**

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

**Postlude**

**This Week’s Daily Bible Readings:**

Monday, April 22. Psalm 95

Tuesday, April 23. Revelation 7:13-17

Wednesday, April 24. Mark 14:26-31

Thursday, April 25. Mark 1:1-15

Friday, April 26. Amos 8:11-13

Saturday, April 27. Mark 4:30-32

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