

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 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, 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.

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; *
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul *
and guides me along right pathways for his 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 spread a table before me in the presence of those
who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

1 Peter 2:19-25

It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 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. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 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. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

John 10:1-10

Jesus said, "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. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of

strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The Fourth Sunday of Easter—Year A

Welcome to our parish. This Sunday is traditionally called Good Shepherd Sunday. The gospel reading each year is a portion of Jesus' discourse on his relationship to us in the image of a shepherd. Shepherds in his day were so close to their flock that the sheep were each known to the shepherd and they knew and responded to his voice. So we each in baptism have been named by our Lord and have become part of his life.

Today's reading from Acts describes the life of the infant church. Central to its life was the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. This small but growing community saw itself as a family sharing everything in common.

Even their most characteristic act of worship, the Eucharist, was, like Jewish Sabbath and Passover worship, something that took place in homes.

The reading from 1 Peter continues this early sermon on the life of the baptized. Suffering and trials are still part of the new Christian's life. By bearing them patiently our lives are conformed more closely with the dying and rising of Jesus. He is our Shepherd and will never lose any of us.

We gather in the Eucharist as a household, a flock, not a group of individuals who simply happen to be in the same place at the same time. We are made into this fellowship by the living presence of Christ in our lives, giving us a unity that transcends all individual differences.