

Pharisees who (in John chapter 9) have presented themselves as false shepherds. Jesus did not pull any punches in this section. He called Himself the Good Shepherd. He called Himself the gate. He says that He brings life. Jesus used parables with metaphors and illustrations to make difficult things of the kingdom of God, more readily understandable. In calling Himself, "The gate," He was using a Metaphor, to tell us that we are only able to enter into the kingdom of God through Him. Jesus spoke of Himself as a Shepherd and as a gate, to tell us that He is the only One by which we enter into a relationship with God.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O Lord our God, how great is the goodness which You have set aside for those who know You; how good are the things that You have prepared for those who love You. We thank You for the grace which sent Christ the Good Shepherd into the world to lay down His life for His sheep. He ransomed us by His blood from the power of evil and bondage of death.

Accept our thanksgiving for Christ's compassion on us. We were like sheep without a shepherd, going astray, but now, through Your great mercy, been returned to the Shepherd of our souls. For Your forgiveness and the remission of all our sins, for the promise of Your peace and the promise of Salvation, for Your presence and power, for Your loving kindness and tender mercy, for every gift and grace in Christ Jesus, we thank You, our merciful Father.

Give Your Church all the things needed, that we may be obedient to the actions and Words of our Savior and seek the lost sheep of the Israel of faith. Help us lift the fallen, rescue the weary, comfort the faint, restore the erring, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, and thus show forth the praises of our Lord and Shepherd, Jesus, Who has called us to be the blessed sheep in His glorious pasture.

Direct our path through the sin, strife, and uncertainty of these times, O Lord. Grant us true faith and a godly heart. Strengthen the sick, support the weak, supply the needy and show Yourself a very present help in every situation and necessity of our faith and life.

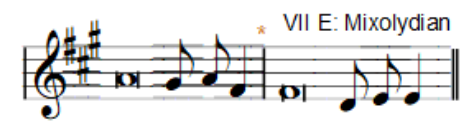
Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.)

Draw all the other sheep of Your pasture to their Shepherd, that we are one fold under our one Shepherd Jesus Christ. When our last hour shall come, because our eyes have seen Your salvation, let us depart in peace according to Your Word, and receive us into everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ.

© Amen.

EASTER FOUR

Chant Tone



<p>Introit I am the good — shepherd.* I know My own and My own know Me, and I lay down My life for the sheep.</p> <p>Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;* let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our sal — vation!</p> <p>Let us come into His presence with thanks — giving;* let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!</p> <p>For the Lord is a — great God,* and a great King a bove all gods.</p>	<p>Oh come, let us worship and — bow down;* let us kneel before the Lord, our — Maker!</p> <p>For He is our God,* and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.</p> <p>Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen.</p> <p>I am the good — shepherd.* I know My own and My own know Me, and I lay down My life for the sheep.</p> <p><i>(Antiphon, John 10:14, 15b; Psalm 95:1-3, 6-7a)</i></p>
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Collect of the Day

Almighty God, merciful Father, since You have wakened from death the Shepherd of Your sheep, grant us Your Holy Spirit that when we hear the voice of our Shepherd we may know Him Who calls us each by name and follow where He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Christ has risen | from the dead*
[God the Father] has crowned Him with glory and — honor,
You have given Him dominion over the works | of Your hands,*
You have put all things un | der His feet.

(Adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Lord God, heavenly Father, Shepherd of our souls, we come before You as those who have been called into Your one flock. We give You humble and hearty thanks that in Your mercy You fed us in the green pastures of Your Word. By giving us the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ Your Son, You led us to the still waters that bring peace to our souls. For Your loving and gracious care, which You lavish on us without any merit or worthiness in us, we give You thanks. Give us the gift of Your Holy Spirit in full measure that we may have strength to walk in the paths of Your righteousness all the days of our life. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

WE HEAR THE VOICE OF OUR SHEPHERD AND WE RESPOND TO THAT VOICE. God's Word comes to us in the most usual manner. We hear it with our ears and we process the information with our brain. God's Word is heard by us in a most supernatural manner. We hear it through our faith because of the work of the Holy Spirit to convince us of its purity and truth. We hear God's Word as spoken by Jesus our Savior. We hear God's Word spoken by our Good Shepherd, and we follow that voice because we know it as the voice of protection and life. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is leading us through our life in a most usual and at the same time a most supernatural Way; the way of man and the Way of God. We listen to His directions because we know them to be the Way, the truth and the life. We welcome all who have come out to worship today, called out by the grace of Jesus Christ.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

NOTE:

In 1973, we moved Good Shepherd Sunday from the Second to the Fourth Sunday of Easter partially in response to the Second Vatican Council's creation of the three year cycle of readings. At that time we also adopted a three year cycle of readings that we revised and published in the 1982 hymnal. In 1983 a collection of Protestant Denominations established their own three year cycle, which they revised in 1992. In 2004 we established our own cycle which agrees with much of the 1992 cycle. With the new hymnal of 2006 we added Propers to the three year cycle.

INTROIT—(Antiphon: John. 10:14, 15b;) Psalm 95:1-3, 6-7a (John 10 will be covered below.) In 2006 we changed our Introit from Psalm 23 to the first section of Psalm 95. For those of us who remember "page 32," these are the words for the Te Deum. Psalm 95 was written by David who was praising God for the wonder of salvation which comes through the Messiah. We use it today because of the mention of being sheep of the pasture of the Lord.

COLLECT

We proclaim with glory the Resurrection of our Shepherd and confirm that it is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that we recognize His voice. (This Collect is only slightly edited from the historic.)

FIRST LESSON—Acts 2:42-47

The first Christians, found themselves shunned by former friends and neighbors, so they banded themselves together with all things in common. It was truly a survival tactic, but at the same time it showed the wonder of God's presence with them, and His power in them. This survival tactic also had the effect of allowing these Jewish Christians to easily leave Jerusalem when it came under attack by the Romans in A.D. 70. They listened to Jesus from Matthew 24:15-28 and moved away.

GRADUAL—Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7, Psalm 8:6

This is quite the compilation of Scripture. It is a statement of the Resurrection followed by the glory and honor given to Christ by our Father. We use this for all of Easter. We cut up the first two parts. Matthew gives us, "...He has risen..." Hebrews gives us the "...You have crowned Him..." The only part of this that is in original form is taken from Psalm 8. It all fits nicely together because Scripture always explains Scripture.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Peter 2:19-25

We use this passage from 1 Peter to keep a focus on our life with our Shepherd Christ, Who was both Priest and sacrifice. Peter tells us that in our suffering we should follow the example of Christ who did not retaliate, instead He entrusted Himself to God. We would do well to keep in mind that our suffering is deserved for our sin, but our salvation is a free gift won through the suffering of Jesus and not deserved by anything we have done.

GOSPEL LESSON—John 10:1-10

In John 10 Jesus describes how the true shepherd cares for His sheep; the true shepherd calls the sheep by name and leads them, (he goes ahead of them for life and protection.) Jesus was showing a contrast with the