

that He did tell them. They won't believe, because they are not of the saved. They were refusing the faith offered them by God. Those who hear Jesus' voice are known by Him, follow Him, and receive eternal life. They can never be wrestled away from His hand. In the first lesson Paul was warning that the Jews had taken themselves away from God. In the second lesson we see those who were faithful being rewarded in Heaven. In this lesson we see those who have taken themselves away from God and those who are faithful. The lessons and the Propers work well together today to remind us that we exist as complete and whole individuals made in the glory of God because we are the sheep, of Jesus' flock. Jesus is the good shepherd, Jesus is God.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O Lord our God, so great is the goodness which You have set aside for those who know You. So good are the things that You have prepared for those who love You. Give us holy knowledge and love, that we, through Jesus, may obtain the glories You have for us. We thank You for the grace which sent Christ the good shepherd into the world to lay down His life for the sheep, and to ransom us by His blood from the power of evil and bondage of death.

Accept our thanksgiving for His compassion on us, we who were like sheep without a shepherd, going astray. Through Your great mercy, we have 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, merciful Father.

Give Your Church all the things needed, that we may follow the example of our Savior. Let us seek the lost sheep of the Israel of faith. Empower us to raise the fallen, rescue the weary, comfort the faint, and restore the erring. Bless us as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless and all the other tasks Jesus laid out for us. Help us show forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Draw all the other sheep of Your pasture to their shepherd, that we are one fold under our One shepherd, Jesus Christ. Be with all who believe; cure their disease, heal their wounds and keep them always in the one faith, one life, and one expectation of salvation.

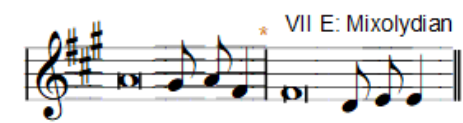
Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of Silent Prayer.)**

When our last hour comes, 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



Introit I am the good — shepherd.* I know My own and My own know Me, and I lay down My life for the sheep. He chose David His — servant* and took him from the — sheepfolds; From following the nursing ewes He — brought him* to shepherd Jacob His people, Israel His in heritage. With upright heart he shep herded them* and guided them with his skillful hand.	
	But we Your people, the sheep of Your — pasture,* will give thanks to You for — ever; From generation to gener — ation* We will re count Your praise. 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. I am the good — shepherd.* I know My own and My own know Me, and I lay down My life for the sheep. <i>(Antiphon, John 10:14, 15b; Psalm 78:70-72,; Psalm 79:13)</i>

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. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

WE HEAR THE VOICE OF OUR SHEPHERD AND WE RESPOND

The Word of God comes to us in the most usual manner. We hear it with our ears and we process the information with our brain. The Word of God comes to us in a most supernatural manner. We hear it through our faith and the work of the Holy Spirit to convince us of its purity and truth. We hear the Word of God as spoken by Jesus our Savior, our good shepherd, and we follow that voice because we know it as the voice of protection and life. Jesus our good shepherd leads us through our life in a most usual way. Jesus our good shepherd leads us through our life in a supernatural Way. In Jesus the way of man and the Way of God combined as our Savior.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

INTROIT—(Antiphon, John 10:14, 15b;) Psalm 78:70-72; 79:13

John 10 is the chapter in which Jesus explained that He (in connection with Psalm 23,) is our shepherd. Verses 14 and 15 are the quintessential statement; Jesus is the good shepherd as He is One with the Father. In 2006 we changed our Introit from Psalm 23. Psalm 78 and 79 were both productions of Asaph David's choir director. 78 is really pleasant because it explains the transition of David from care taker of sheep to caretaker of the chosen people. Psalm 79 complains that too many Gentiles are taking over the temple and is useful only in the last verse.

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 20:17-35

(This lesson was also changed in 2006.) It is notable because Paul referred to the Ephesians as a flock that needed the elders to shepherd them in their Christianity. Paul had likely spent a great deal of time listening to Jesus, even while hating Him, and clearly knew Jesus' shepherd statements.

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

This is a multi-verse compilation of Scripture. A Resurrection statement followed by the glory and honor given to Christ by our Father.

EPISTLE LESSON—Revelation 7:9-17

The themes for the readings from Revelation on the five other Sundays of Easter, primarily focus on the Resurrected and Exalted Christ. This reading focuses especially on the people He won by His sacrifice; the sheep for whom He has become The shepherd. Verse 17, "the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd," is tied by John to Psalm 23 (as it finishes with, "He will lead them to springs of living water.") The results of Christ's work are spelled out for His faithful. In Heaven there is no hunger, or suffering, or thirst or effects of sin. The Lamb is the shepherd. He was both the sacrifice for the sins of the world, and the Priest who made the sacrifice. Through that one sacrifice He has made satisfaction for the sins of the world. As shepherd (king) He rules our hearts and minds and brings us to Him.

GOSPEL LESSON—John 10:22-30

In the 23rd Psalm God tells us that He is our shepherd. In our Gospel Lesson, Jesus was surrounded by a hostile and impatient crowd. They demanded that He tell them plainly if He is the Messiah. Jesus answered