

## *“Hearts Overflowing”*

Fourth Sunday of Easter

**May 3, 2020**



*After the events of Holy Week, the disciples are devastated. They are in the midst of full-blown grief and disbelief. Into the heart of that grief came a stunning revelation – life had overcome death. God’s faithfulness would build them up once again – will bind them together. Is this possible in our lives? Today’s worship will say, “Yes, it can! Come and See! Live and love! This is the heart of the matter!”*

*“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.” ACTS 2: 46-47A*

### **Prepare**

*Rock, stone, or worry stone...Candle...Breakfast–bread, wine, cereal, cookie, milk.  
A glass full to the brim with water to drop your worry stones into.*

### **Welcome - Announcements**

*MUSIC: “Shelter Me”*

- 1. Shepherd and sheep, my God and I:  
to fresh green fields you led my steps in days gone by.  
You gave me rest by quiet springs  
and filled my soul with peace your loving presence brings.**

**Chorus: O shelter me, O shelter me:  
the way ahead is dark and difficult to see.  
O shelter me, O shelter me:  
all will be well if only you will shelter me.**

### **Opening Act of Centering Our Hearts as One**

I invite you to place your hand on your heart;  
let’s lightly tap together in a slow heartbeat rhythm.

Holy Living God,  
Heartbeat of Creation,  
help us to take this time to center on you,  
for you made us,

you gave us life,  
and you continue to be with us  
every moment  
every breath  
every step.

**Be still, O heart, you're not alone, your beat is shared with me.  
Come Now, and calm, and center here, you're mine secure and free.**

Pick up our heart stone, sometimes called a “worry stone,”  
its surface reminds us that God’s touch  
is within us, between us, and around us.

As close and real as this stone is in our hands right now,  
is how close Love is to us always.

Imagine letting go of our worries for now releasing them into God’s heart of love.

**Into your care, we offer now, our worries, fears and strife.  
We turn to you and know you're near – Your light, our love and life.**

We light our candles now and set our heart worry stones or rock next to it.  
*Light the candle(s) you have on your table and put your stone(s) around the base of it.*

## **BREAK BREAD Blessing the Meal**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS: *(inspired by Psalm 23)*

L: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

**C: But, O Lord, we are consumed with wanting more.**

L: He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

**C: But, O Lord, other pastures seem greener.  
The waters aren't always still. Our souls still thirst.**

L: He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

**C: O Lord, we long to be led by you,  
though we may complain along the path.**

L: 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.

**C: And yet, O God, we do sometimes fear.  
May we feel your presence, your comfort and your forgiveness anew.**

L: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**C: O God, sometimes we refuse to sit down at your table.  
Forgive us and help us to see your overflowing mercy.**

L: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

**C: Forgive us, God, and lead us into your house.**

L: Because of God's great love for you, all your sins are forgiven.

**C: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(together)*

***In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples,  
saying: Take and eat; this is my body,  
given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.***

***Again, after supper, he took the cup,  
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink,  
saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.***

LORD'S PRAYER *(together)*

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.***

***Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;***

***and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.***

Leader: Today we will speak of the pastures of well-being that Christ, the Shepherd, desires for the flock. Let us give thanks for the well-being of being together and the abundance of our table. Let us pray this "repeat after me prayer"...

Shepherding God,

**Shepherding God,** *(continue to repeat the next lines in this way)*

We gather in your name...

invited by Jesus...

bound together with your Spirit...

in union with each other...

Feed our bodies and our spirits...

with your comforting presence...

so that we might be your comfort to others...

Bless this food...

and break open our hearts...

Bless this drink...

and pour out your love...

Amen...

And now I invite you to pick something (bread and wine) from the table and let us say the one word that is at the heart of the matter in every blessing we do at our tables, repeating after me...

*(with gusto)*

“Grateful!”

**“Grateful!”**

Let us begin to “break bread” while we “break open the Word” in our scriptures.

*Begin to serve & eat even breakfast as the next scriptures & thoughts are shared*

## **Breaking Open the Word with Scripture**

Leader: Jesus used the metaphor of a shepherd several times in his ministry. We hear that famous song from Psalm 23 through worship today in “Shelter Me.” In this passage from the Gospel of John, the sheep know that the Shepherd really cares about them and offers what they need – good, abundant, green pastures to eat in. They recognize this Shepherd who takes care of them as they hear his voice.

Reader: I assure you that whoever doesn’t enter into the sheep pen through the gate but climbs over the wall is a thief and an outlaw. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The guard at the gate opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Whenever he has gathered all of his sheep, he goes before them and they follow him, because they know his voice. They won’t follow a stranger but will run away because they don’t know the stranger’s voice.” Those who heard Jesus use this analogy didn’t understand what he was saying.

So Jesus spoke again, “I assure you that I am the gate of the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and outlaws, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest. - JOHN 10: 1-10

*MUSIC: “Shelter Me”*

**2. Yet now I tread a diff’rent way;  
death dogs my path with stealthy steps from day to day.  
I cannot find your peaceful place  
but dwell in dreary darkness, longing for your face.**

**Chorus: O shelter me, O shelter me:  
the way ahead is dark and difficult to see.  
O shelter me, O shelter me:  
all will be well if only you will shelter me.**

Leader: There are so many ways to live life to the fullest right now—or, as another version of the scripture calls it “living life abundantly.” Being together, either physically or virtually, is one important way for us in this moment. Perhaps we can keep up some of our “connection habits” we have exercised well beyond our time of isolation. This next scripture is an extended version of our theme scripture for our Easter Season series and shows us the value the early Christians, some of whom had to gather in secret and isolation, were supporting one another “abundantly.”

Reader: The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved. - ACTS 2: 42-47

Leader: In these two scriptures we see the desire of God for us to be taken care of, for us to live to the fullest, and for us to support one another in having abundant life and community, food and gladness. The “thief” in the first passage could be anything that robs us of those things. Sometimes the sacrifices we have endured because of our attempts to slow this virus can feel as if we’ve been “robbed” of our well-being. But we can also turn that around and see that these sacrifices are how we share goodwill and well-being with one another. Our hearts overflow with the grace and guidance we know from the Shepherd and we want that goodness for everyone. Glad and generous hearts overflow with love in so many ways.

## **Action Response**

Leader: Our response today is to place our worry stones in a full glass of water. This glass of water filled to the brim symbolizes the state of grace and love that is always and already what God gives to us. When we drop our worry and grief into it, we will see the love spill over. Placing our feelings and trust into God’s love helps us to pour out love all around us, making that love available to everyone. There is always enough to go around.

## **Breaking Open our Lives with Discussion**

Leader: Our theme scripture says, “they ate their food with glad and generous hearts.” One way we can be glad and generous is to share about how we are finding strength, hope, love and peace in these days. This is part of “breaking bread” with each other as we break open our hearts to one another as well. In this week’s scripture, Jesus talks about listening to the Shepherd, not to the things that “rob” us of our well-being.

*Who or what have you found to be a “voice of the Shepherd,”  
giving you a sense of well-being and abundance in this time?  
What things are “thieves,” threatening to rob you of a sense of calm and trust?*

*Or if you can't think of something from this week,  
what do you have in your memory as something that offers abundance?  
Let's take some time at your table to talk or journal about these questions.*

Complete this sentence, "I see abundance (in/when/where) \_\_\_\_\_."

## **Breaking Open our Hearts with Prayer**

Compassionate God,  
we pray for vulnerable people all over this world,  
people without power  
who live in places of terror and violence, fear, and oppression.

Protect them, God;  
we feel so powerless ourselves to help them.  
Encourage and empower us to work  
for peace and freedom from fear in our own contexts.  
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of grace,  
we pray for those whose lives have been turned upside down  
by various disasters: floods, fire, fear of a pandemic and drought-driven famine.  
Bring courage and hope to all;  
through their pain, may they remain connected to you in prayer.

We pray for those say there is no God;  
may we through the living of our own lives  
demonstrate the joy and peace of a Spirit-centered existence.  
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of community,  
we pray for our own congregation;  
may we be a source of hope for our neighborhood.

Help us to discern needs and work to fulfill them.  
Strengthen and unify our congregation  
and show us how we can be the disciples you envision us to be.  
Return the sick to health and well-being especially \_\_\_\_\_  
and relieve the suffering of those who have lost loved ones,  
are unable to find meaningful employment  
and fear the challenges of old age.  
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Guide us, Great Shepherd,  
into your paths of right relationships.  
In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

## Praise God!

It is time to praise God and raise our endorphin levels to improve our heart-health, both physically and spiritually! So whether your “dance” is in your bed, in your chair, or all over the living room, it’s time for the Easter Season Dance Party! If you are going to dance standing up, go ahead and get ready. And let’s start with this affirmation, repeating after me (*with some energy!*)

We know Jesus is present among us... *[repeat]*  
even in this very home... *[repeat]*  
We will not let fear be louder than love... *[repeat]*  
but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls... *[repeat]*  
we will sing God’s praise... *[repeat]*  
for we are Easter People! ...*[repeat]*

## Have Goodwill

That was great! I hope you feel some good vibes right now. So, while we have our energy up, let’s send some energy out to the world that needs it! What message does the world need? Perhaps you will decide to create a way to let more and more people know the message of Christ, “You are not alone. I am here. My love is overflowing with love for you.” What can we do to create more well-being in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now? How can we offer abundance to those who are working so hard right now? How can we offer abundance to those who feeling short on calm?

How about making more “worry stones” to give away. Collect a few rocks that have a surface large enough for a design and smooth enough to paint. Wash the rocks with soap and water and dry them thoroughly. Using acrylic paint or permanent markers and paint your rock with hearts. Once they are dry, leave them in a place(s) where people can see them (or give them away if you want, and feel hearts overflowed with gladness!

*MUSIC: “Shelter Me”*

**3. I will look back in days to come  
and realize your faithfulness has led me home.  
Within your house I’ll find my peace,  
trusting that in your mercy you have sheltered me.**

**Chorus: O shelter me, O shelter me:  
the way ahead is dark and difficult to see.  
O shelter me, O shelter me:  
all will be well if only you will shelter me.**



### **Blessing** *(based on Psalm 16)*

As we close this time together, remember:  
God is always with you. No matter what you face,  
no matter what trials or hardships come your way,  
God is right beside you, whispering  
“Peace be with you,”  
guiding and directing your path.  
So do not live in fear, but in joy.  
Take heart! This is the heart of the matter.  
**Amen.**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Adapted from [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/series](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/series) by Dr. Marcia McFee.  
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#### **WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS**

Pastor Julie Rogness, Intern Pastor Patty Bjorklund; Reader & Musical Offering Katie Van Epps; Mission Control Tech Leadership-Jim Braaten

#### **CONNECTING OPPORTUNITIES**

Prerecorded Worship: (Website) [flkenyon.org](http://flkenyon.org) (Facebook) **First Evangelical Lutheran Kenyon MN**  
E-Mails: Pastor: [firstpastorkenyon@gmail.com](mailto:firstpastorkenyon@gmail.com) Church Of: [floffice@frontier.com](mailto:floffice@frontier.com)  
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#### **REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

Faye Marcuson, Ron Grose, Mary Ravlin Gould, Ken Wold, Barb Schaller, Lila Cole, Colette Flom, Stephen Berge, Jeannie Ellingson, Sid Strandemo.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

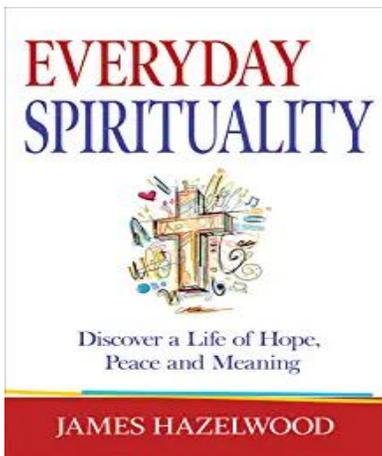


**Coffee Hour** – Join for coffee following worship at 10 AM. Email Pastor Julie for a link to the Zoom Coffee Hour at [firstpastorkenyon@gmail.com](mailto:firstpastorkenyon@gmail.com) Zoom is an online platform for us to meet and visit. You will need a computer with a camera and microphone (attached to your computer), internet and a cup of coffee or something to sip on as we chat.



**Sunday, May 17 at 11:00 a.m. — Drive By “Honk and Wave” in the church parking lot for the six 2020 KWHS graduates who are members of First Lutheran.**

The Students will be parked in the church parking lot, facing west. At 11:00 Church members, family and friends are invited to drive in the south entrance of the parking lot, drive by, “honk & wave” to show their support of the students and exit out the north.



**BOOK GROUP ON ZOOM — EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY:**

*Discover a Life of Hope, Peace & Meaning,*  
Written by former bishop, James Hazelwood

We will meet at least three times toward the end of May. Please let Pastor Julie know if you would like to join the discussion.