Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

You are the shepherd who gathers us in your mighty and loving arms. Help your church to listen for your voice, especially when the voices of sin, idolatry, and oppression threaten to overpower us. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

The green pastures, still waters, and dark valleys of this earth all belong to you, O Lord. Sustain your creation with a love that is both mighty and just. Where there is destruction, bring healing. Where there is desolation, bring abundance. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all of creation. Direct leaders in our own time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

You journey with us wherever our paths may lead. We pray for those feeling overwhelmed by anxiety or depression or suffering in any way (especially). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You are the sheepgate that gives safety to your beloved flocks. Provide protection for refugees, victims of domestic violence, those who are imprisoned, and all people who are vulnerable to violence and mistreatment. (Local concerns may be named.) Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You call your sheep by name and lead them through the valley of death. We give you thanks for those who have died and now dwell in your house forever (especially). Be with those who mourn, and give them hope in the promise of resurrection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (Philip and James, Apostles) John 14:8-14. Tuesday (commemoration of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, died 373) Hebrews 13:20-21. Wednesday Jeremiah 23:1-8. Thursday (commemoration of Monica, mother of Augustine, died 387) Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16. Friday Exodus 3:1-12. Saturday Jeremiah 26:20-24. Fifth Sunday of Easter Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14.

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13 of 15 Tracks 1 and 2



Fourth Sunday of Easter April 30, 2023

Today is sometimes called "Good Shepherd Sunday." Jesus is called the "gate" of the sheep in today's gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world's violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God's tender care to all creation.

Prayer of the Day

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

Today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

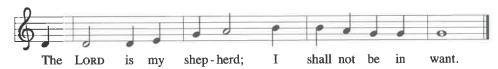
[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowthe prayers.

⁴³Awe came upon everyone, bewho believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and

distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent ship, to the breaking of bread and much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous cause many wonders and signs were hearts, 47 praising God and havbeing done by the apostles. 44All ing the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being



Psalm 23; refrain, Ps. 23:1



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

²The Lord makes me lie down | in green pastures and leads me be- | side still waters.

³You restore my | soul, O LORD,

and guide me along right pathways I for your name's sake.

⁴Though 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. R

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is I running over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

1 Peter 2:19-25

Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.

It is a credit to you if, being aware 28 When he was abused, he did not of God, you endure pain while suf- return abuse; when he suffered, he fering unjustly. 20 If you endure when did not threaten; but he entrustyou are beaten for doing wrong, ed himself to the one who judges what credit is that? But if you endure justly. 24 He himself bore our sins when you do right and suffer for it, in his body on the cross, so that, you have God's approval. 21 For to free from sins, we might live for this you have been called, because righteousness; by his wounds you Christ also suffered for you, leaving have been healed. 25 For you were you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

John 10:1-10

Iesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

by another way is a thief and a ban-saying to them. dit. ²The one who enters by the gate from him because they do not know and have it abundantly."

[Jesus said:] "Very truly, I tell you, the voice of strangers." 6Jesus used anyone who does not enter the this figure of speech with them, but sheepfold by the gate but climbs in they did not understand what he was

⁷So again Jesus said to them, is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate gatekeeper opens the gate for him, for the sheep. 8All who came before and the sheep hear his voice. He calls me are thieves and bandits; but the his own sheep by name and leads sheep did not listen to them. 9I am them out. ⁴When he has brought out the gate. Whoever enters by me will all his own, he goes ahead of them, be saved, and will come in and go and the sheep follow him because out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief they know his voice. ⁵They will not comes only to steal and kill and defollow a stranger, but they will run stroy. I came that they may have life,