

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita
The Fourth Sunday of Easter — Earth Day
10:30am — April 21, 2024

*The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by the Gero and Merkens Families
In memory of Ron Gero — loving son, husband, father and grandfather — a child of God.
We love and miss you always.*

Before the service begins, we encourage you to use the following for meditation.

Our resurrection is not just a future event; resurrection is for now. Resurrection informs or reforms how we live today. Saint Paul called it “resurrection power,” in the here and now. Resurrection is about hope for the future and about power for the present. Br. Curtis Almquist, SSJE

Prelude *His Eye is On the Sparrow* Charles H. Gabriel

Service begins in the Courtyard

Litany for Creation Care:

Reader: Grant that all your creatures may thank and serve you;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Grant favorable weather, temperate rain, and fruitful seasons, providing food and drink for all your creatures;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God .**

Reader: Open our eyes to the joy and beauty of creation, that we may see your presence in all your works;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Look with favor upon all who care for the earth, the water, and the air, that the riches of creation may abound for all your creatures;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Make us faithful stewards of creation, wisely caring for the earth, the air, the seas, and all the life they bear;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Awaken us to our responsibility for the care of creation;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Forgive us our waste and pollution of creation and strengthen us to heal wounds we have inflicted;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Remember all in captivity and those who are hunted, trapped, deserted, or abused, that they may find safety in homes of loving care;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Do not forget those animals who have died yet remain dear to us, that they may rejoice in your new creation;

People: **Shower your blessing on earth, O God.**

Reader: Holy God: No sparrow falls without your attention; nothing dies that is lost to you; nothing comes into being without your love. Give us just and compassionate hearts, that we may serve the earth and all its creatures, holding fast to the vision of your peaceable reign in which all will live with you eternally; through the Risen One, Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Congregation processes into the church carrying items from outside to place on the cloth in front of the altar.

THE WORD OF GOD

Entrance Hymn

"God, the sculptor of the mountains"

St. Thomas



1. God the sculp - tor of the moun - tains, God the mil - ler
2. God the dress - er of the vine - yard, God the plant - er
3. God the gate of all de - liv' - rance, God the clea - ver

of the sand, God the jewel - er of the hea - vens,
of the wheat, God the reap - er of the har - vest,
of the sea, God the pil - lar of the dark - ness.

God the pot - ter of the land: you are womb of
God the source of all we eat: you are host at
God the bea - con of the free: you are pre - sent

all cre - a - tion, we are form - less; — shape us now.
ev - 'ry ta - ble, we are hun - gry; — feed us now.
ev - 'ry mo - ment, we are search - ing; — lead us now.

Priest: Alleluia. Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

1. Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love;
 2. All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heaven re - flect thy rays,
 3. Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,
 hearts un - fold like flowers be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
 stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
 well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean depth of hap - py rest!

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness; drive the dark of doubt a - way;
 Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, bloom - ing mea - dow, flash - ing sea,
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our Bro - ther, all who live in love are thine;

giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
 chant - ing bird and flow - ing foun - tain, call us to re - joice in thee.
 teach us how to love each o - ther, lift us to the joy di - vine.

The Collect of the Day

Priest: God be with you.
 People: **And also with you.**
 Priest: Let us pray.

O God, from whom all good proceeds: You established your covenant with all creation. Guide us and all your people, that we may walk upon the earth in righteousness and peace, and honor you in our kinship with all your creatures; through our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, to the ages of ages. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

The First Reading Acts 4:5-12

Reader: Marv Aardahl

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.' There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
 People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 23

Reader: Mary Bennett

- 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.

The Second Reading 1 John 3:16-24

Reader: Mary Bennett

A Reading from the First Letter of John.

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us-- and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

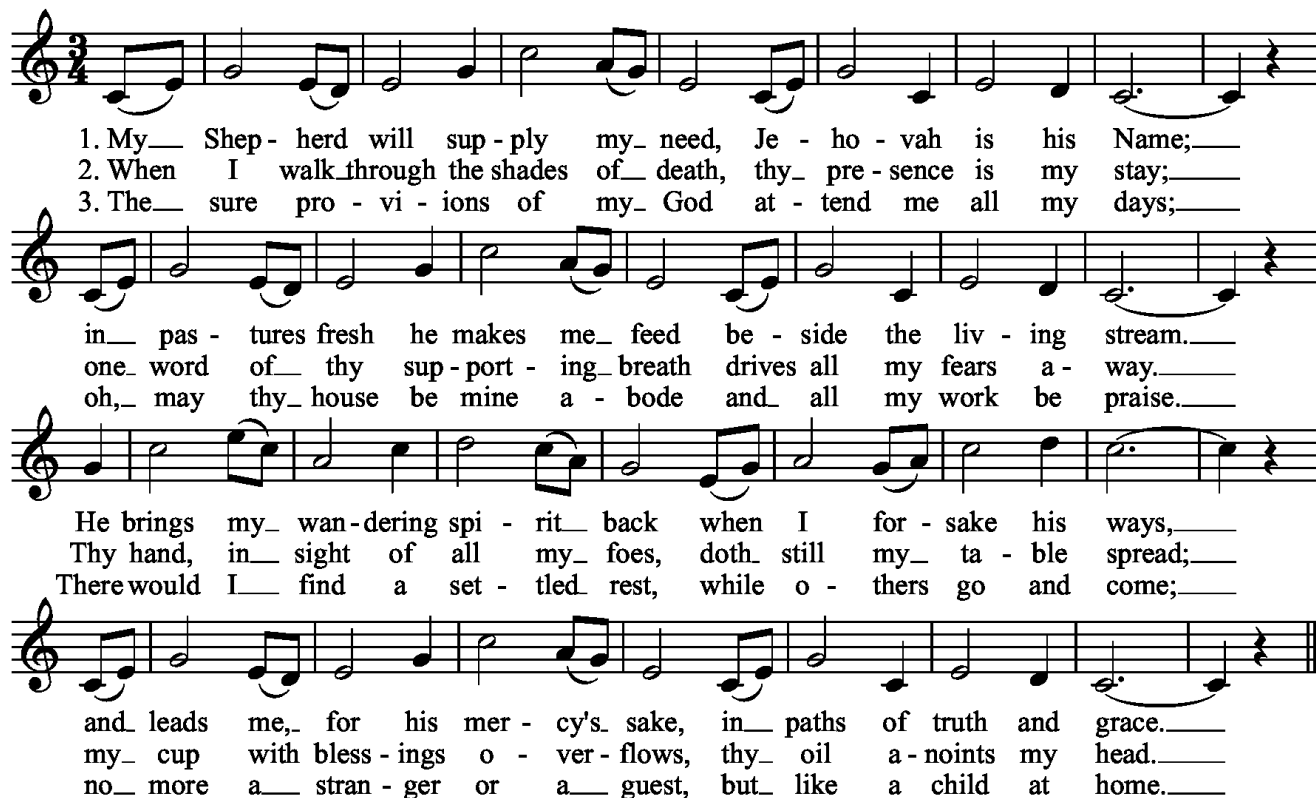
Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

Gradual Hymn #664

"My shepherd will supply my need"

Resignation



1. My Shep-herd will sup-ply my need, Je-ho-vah is his Name;____
2. When I walk through the shades of death, thy pre-sence is my stay;____
3. The sure pro-vi-sions of my God at-tend me all my days;____
in pas-tures fresh he makes me feed be-side the liv-ing stream.____
one word of thy sup-port-ing breath drives all my fears a-way.____
oh, may thy house be mine a-bode and all my work be praise.____
He brings my wan-dering spi-rit back when I for-sake his ways,____
Thy hand, in sight of all my foes, doth still my ta-ble spread;____
There would I find a set-tled rest, while o-thers go and come;____
and leads me, for his mer-cy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.____
my cup with bless-ings o-ver-flows, thy oil a-noints my head.____
no more a stran-ger or a guest, but like a child at home.____

The Gospel Reading John 10:11-18

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John.

People: Glory to you, O Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

Priest: The Gospel of the Savior.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

The Sermon

Payton Hoegh
Postulant

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

Please stand as you are able.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God creates all things,
renews all things and celebrates all things.

We believe Earth is a sanctuary,
a sacred planet filled with God's presence,
a home for us to share with our kin.

We believe that God became flesh and blood,
became a piece of Earth,
a human being called Jesus Christ,
who lived and breathed and spoke among us,
suffered and died on a cross,
for all human beings and for all creation.

We believe that the risen Jesus
is the Christ at the core of creation
reconciling all things to God,
renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

We believe the Spirit renews life in creation
groans in empathy with a suffering creation,
and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.

We believe that with Christ we will rise
and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.

Prayers of the People

Reader: Sheri Flay

During the silence after each bidding, the people offer their own prayers, either silently or aloud.

Intercessor: Let us pray for the revealing of the reign of God in the world, now and always.

Intercessor and People:

In the beginning, God was.

Here and now, God is.

In the future, God will be.

Creator of earth, sea, and sky, kindle the fire of your Spirit within us that we may be bold to heal and defend the earth, and pour your blessing upon all who work for the good of the planet.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Breath of life, receive our thanks for the beauty of our local habitat and all who dwell in it, and grant us the wisdom and will to conserve it.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Source of life, heal and redeem the wounds of your creation, and visit the places and people who suffer from our indifference, neglect, and greed.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Lover of all you have made, we thank you for the wondrous diversity of your creatures, and we pray for their well-being.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Author of the book of nature, receive our gratitude for places of restoration and healing, and continue to bless those places that feed our lives and spirits.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Wise Creator, whose works are full of mystery, give us wonder and appreciation for your creatures with whom we find ourselves in conflict.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Giver of all good gifts, awaken us daily to our dependence upon your bounty, and make us always thankful for the abundance of your blessings.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Divine Physician, heal our communities, especially those where neglect, greed, or violence inflict suffering upon people and other creatures.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Comforter of all the earth, sustain the people of this congregation who desire or need your presence and help, especially Charles, Tom and Jack.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Rock and refuge of all your creatures, receive into everlasting mercy all those who have died, especially Ellen and David.

Silence

Intercessor: God, Giver of life,

People: Hear our prayer.

Priest:

Jesus Christ, teach us to be at one with Earth. Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation, cries for justice from the land, the seas and the skies. Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit in creation, groans of longing for a new creation. Jesus Christ, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of celebration from the sea, the forest and the air. Christ, teach us to care.

Amen

The Peace

Priest: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Members of the congregation who are joining us via livestream are encouraged to post "Peace be with you" in the comments or to use the "like" or "love" reaction button to take part in the virtual exchange of God's peace with the rest of the congregation at this time.

Please be seated.

Welcome

Offertory Prayer

The People remain seated and say together:

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Offertory

Blue Green Hills of Earth
St. Stephen's Parish Choir

Kim Oler
arr. by Carl Strommen

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology

Old 100th

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures,
here be - low. Praise God, you hosts in heav'n a -
bove; Praise God the Trin - i - ty of Love. A - men.

Priest: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to God.**

Priest: Let us give thanks.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right to give you thanks, loving Creator. Your Word is the impulse for all things to be, for space, stars and stardust to appear, for Earth to emerge from the deep, for life to be born of Earth and for humans to be born of Earth and the Spirit.

Your Spirit is the life impulse in all things, renewing the barren and healing the wounded, groaning in anticipation of a new creation, stirring new life born of water and the Spirit.

You chose to be born a human being, to become a part of Earth, to suffer, die and rise from death to redeem humankind, renew creation, and affirm all born of Earth and the Spirit.

Your presence is the living impulse in all things, the Christ deep among us, filling Earth—land, sea and air; filling every element and place; filling the grain and the grape we share with you this day.

Therefore with angels and archangels, ancient voices in the forest, high voices from the sky, deep voices from the sea and the whole company of creation, we proclaim your presence among us.

Sanctus #S 128

Mathias

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, —
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the high-est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world.

In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

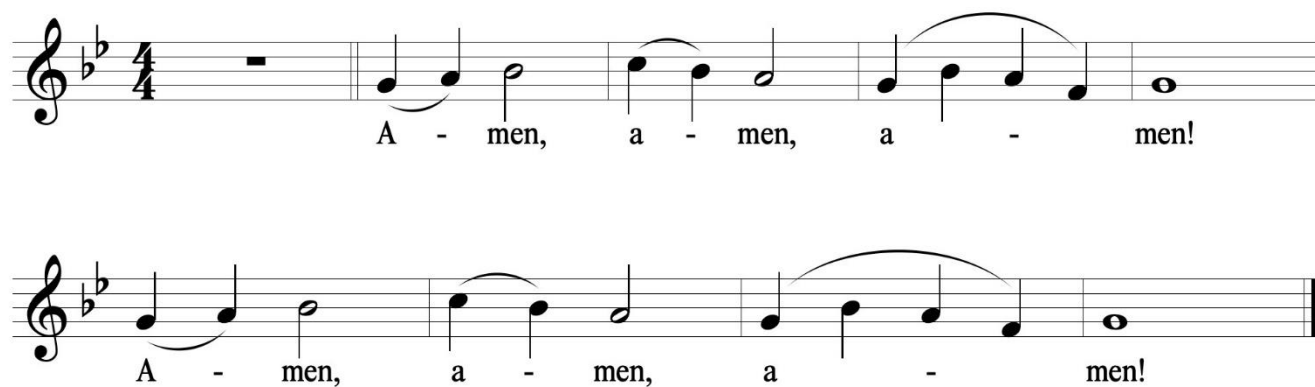
And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Stephen and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

Great Amen from Mass of Creation

Marty Haugen



As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

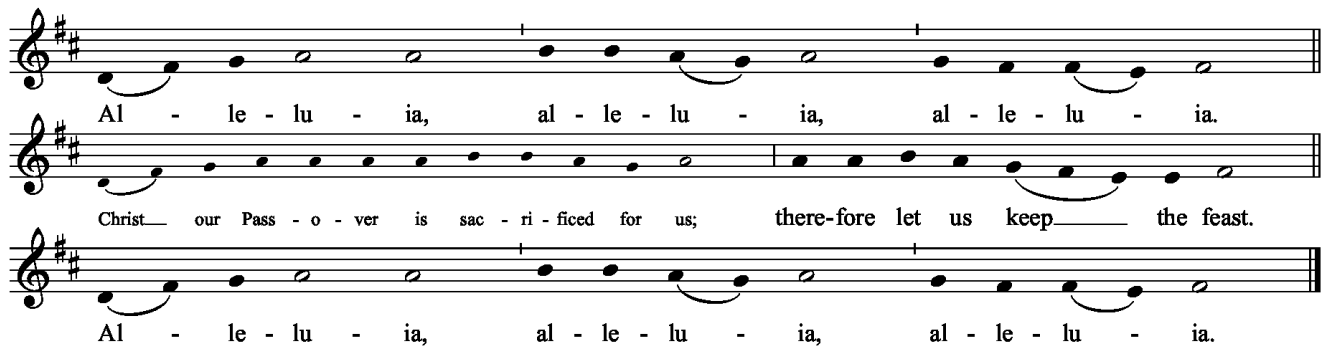
A period of silence is kept.

Please remain standing during the Fraction Anthem.

Fraction Hymn #S 154

Hurd

Cantor will sing the refrain first, followed by the congregation.



The Gifts of God for the People of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Please be seated.

*All are welcome to receive communion. The table we set belongs to God.
Wherever you find yourself on your spiritual journey
you are welcome to receive the Bread and Wine made holy.*

The church teaches that temporal isolation cannot constrain the sacrament's ineffable power. Calling us to "massive, corporate, spiritual communion,"

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

Priest and People say together:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking communion.

Communion Music

Sing to the Mountains

Bob Dufford

Antiphon: C **Lightly** ♩ = 176


Sing to the moun - tains, sing to the sea. Raise your
 6 Am Dm⁷ G G⁷ C Em
 voic - es, lift your hearts. This is the day the Lord has
 12 A D G C Fine
 made. Let all the earth re - joice. G

17 F
 Verse 1:
 1. I will give thanks to You, my Lord. You have
 22 G⁷ C E E⁷
 an - swered my plea. You have saved my
 27 Am C F G G⁷ To Antiphon:
 soul from death. You are my strength and my song. C G

33 Dm
 Verse 2:
 2. Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord. G
 41 E E⁷ Am Am⁷ Dm Dm⁷ G G⁷ To Antiphon:
 Hea - ven and earth are full of Your glo - ry. G

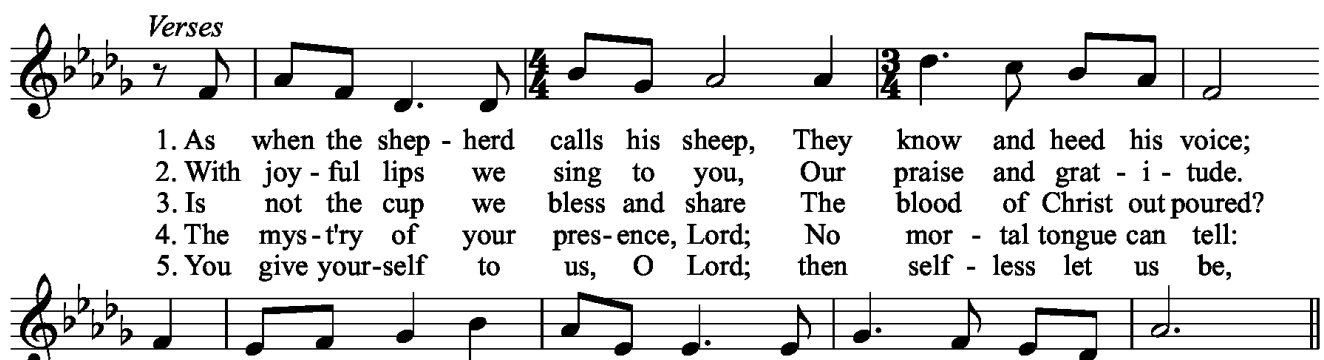
49 F
 Verse 3:
 3. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us be
 54 C E E⁷
 glad and re - joice. He has turned all
 59 Am Am⁷ Dm Dm⁷ G G⁷ To Antiphon:
 death to life. Sing of the glo - ry of God.

Refrain



You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat,
come give to us, O — sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.

Verses



1. As when the shep - herd calls his sheep, They know and heed his voice;
2. With joy - ful lips we sing to you, Our praise and grat - i - tude.
3. Is not the cup we bless and share The blood of Christ out poured?
4. The mys - t'ry of your pres - ence, Lord; No mor - tal tongue can tell:
5. You give your - self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

So when you call your fam - ly Lord, We fol - low and re - joice.
That you should count us wor - thy Lord, To share this heav'n - ly food.
Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare Our one - ness in the Lord?
Whom all the world can - not con - tain Comes in our hearts to dwell.
To serve each oth - er in your name In truth and char - i - ty.

Please stand as you are able.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

God of Life,
who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son
to the death of the cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
have delivered us from the power of our enemy:
grant us so to die daily to sin,
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Blessing

May God, who gives patience and encouragement,
give you a spirit of unity to live in harmony.

May Christ, who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his new life; so that with one voice you may glorify God.

May the Spirit give to you and to all you love
comfort and peace, light and joy, safety and wisdom.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the one,
holy and undivided Trinity be among you
and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

“Savior like a shepherd lead us ”

Sicilian Mariners

1. Sa - vior like a shep - herd lead us; much we need thy
 2. We are Thine do Thou be - friend us, be the Guard - ian
 3. Ear - ly let us seek thy fa - vor, ear - ly let us

ten - der care; in thy plea - sant pas - tures feed us;
 of our way; keep Thy flock, from sin de - fend us,
 learn thy will; do thou, Lord, our on - ly Sa - vior,

for our use thy folds pre - pare. Bless - ed Je - sus!
 seek us when we go a - stray; Bless - ed Je - sus!
 with thy love our bos - oms fill. Bless - ed Je - sus!

Bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast bought us, thine we are.
 Bless - ed Je - sus! Hear, O hear us when we pray.
 Bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.

The Dismissal

Priest: Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Prayers of the People taken from *Praying the Scriptures* by Jeremiah D. Williamson, ©2014 by Jeremiah D. Williamson. All Rights Reserved.

Spiritual Communion Prayer: St. Alphonsus de Liguori, 1696-1787

From *The Hymnal 1982* #376 “Joyful, joyful we adore thee”, Words: Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933) Music: *Hymn to Joy*; Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827); adapt. Edward Hodges (1796–1867), alt. Copyright: Words: Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner & Sons. #S-128 Title: The Holy Eucharist II, Holy, holy, holy Lord: *Sanctus* Music: William Mathias (b. 1934) Copyright: © 1976, Oxford University Press, Inc. #S 154 Title: The Holy Eucharist, Fraction Anthem: Christ our Passover Music: From *New Plain Song*, David Hurd (b. 1950) Copyright: Copyright © 1981, G.I.A. Publications, Inc. #664 “My Shepherd will supply my need”, Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748); para. of Psalm 23 Music: *Resignation*, American folk melody, acc. David Hurd (b. 1950) Copyright: Music: Accompaniment © 1985, David Hurd. #708 “Savior like a shepherd lead us”, Words: *Hymns for the Young*, ca. 1830, alt. Music: *Sicilian Mariners*, Sicilian melody, from *The European Magazine and London Review*, 1792.

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Gift of Finest Wheat, Words: Omar Westendorf. Music: Robert E. Kreutz. Copyright 1976 The Archdiocesan Music Office, Philadelphia Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.

God the sculptor of the mountains, Text John Thornburg, 1993, alt. Music: Amanda Husberg, 1995. Text 1993 John Thornburg. Music 1996 Abingdon Press (admin. The Copyright Company).

Doxology — Music: Old 100th, melody from *Pseumes octante trois de David*, 1551, alt.; harm. After Louis Bourgeois (1510?-1561?).