

Call to Worship

God is our Shepherd – leading us beside still waters – restoring our souls. The Spirit leads us in right paths even when we travel through dark valleys. We feel safe because God is with us. Let us worship God...

Lenten Liturgy

God provides for every need

**...guidance in right paths, presence in darkest valleys,
nourishment beyond measure.**

God shines light on the world in Jesus

**...opening eyes that are blind, exposing prejudice and fear,
offering new understanding of life's good purpose.**

But we persist in our own ways

**...judging by appearance, denying others' experience,
hoarding what we can for ourselves.**

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy. Let us pray...

Creator God, you are the Source of light and love, rest and nurture, hope and peace. Open our eyes to your goodness. Empower us to live as children of light, bringing a rich harvest of all that is good and right and true. Enlighten us to see the world with your eyes of love. So may all people know your goodness and mercy forever, through Jesus Christ the light of the world. Amen

Scripture

Psalm 23 [NRSV, *the Psalter*]

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures – leads me beside still waters. restores my soul: and leads me in right paths for the sake of the Lord's name.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil – for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.

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

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all my life – and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for the length of my days.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Message **23rd Psalm Homily**

> ***I heard the voice of Jesus say***

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† Pastoral Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

You, O God, the Good Shepherd, lead us beside still waters. You have sent your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world as the lamb who redeems us from our sin. He has become the light that illumines the darkness, allowing us to learn what is pleasing to you. You know the thoughts of our hearts before we know them ourselves. Hear our prayer...

When the journey gets too difficult, when we feel depleted, when our compassion turns to complaining and our efforts toward justice and mercy seem to have no impact – we remember that you made us, O God, and not we ourselves. You are our creator – the saving of the world is not on our

shoulders but a task we undertake with you. When we come to you, O God, you give us rest and, in that rest, we remember what we are all about. Hear our prayer...

O God, we pray this day for all who have a song they cannot sing or a burden they cannot bear – we pray for all who live in chains they cannot break or who wander homeless, unable to return – we pray for those who are sick and for those who tend them – for those who wait for loved ones and those who wait in vain. We pray this day for those who hunger or thirst while others hoard their abundance. We pray for those who are misunderstood and oppressed and ignored while others continue a life of indifference to the needs of others. We pray for those who cannot express the love in their hearts and for those who yearn to hear those words. Hear our pray, O Lord, and have mercy upon us as we pray 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen**

Blessing

Continue to trust that God holds onto you, shepherds your life, and comforts your soul. May the grace of Jesus, the Christ; the love of God and the nurturing community of the Holy Spirit embrace us all. **Amen**

> ***Shalom chaverim*** (*Hebrew and English*)

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