

Greeting and Announcements

Responsive Call to Worship

When we pass through the waters, **God is there with us.**

When we suffer and feel hopeless, **God is there with us.**

When we are joyful and celebratory, **God is there with us.**

Whether we feel triumphant or defeated, **God is there with us, always.**

Come, let us worship together, for God is with us!

Prayer of Adoration

Shepherding God, we give you thanks for mercy that reaches out, for patience that waits our return, for love that is always ready to welcome us and bring us home.

You are faithful, and you are kind. We praise and thank you for all the blessings we enjoy, and for the gift of this new day. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Invitation to Confession

When we look at the relationships we hope to have with one another, and with God, we must admit how broken we are. But, as we gather in the presence of God, we are promised forgiveness and healing, if we will confess our sins.

Prayer of Confession.

You know how stubborn we can be, Holy God. You call us to serve others, and we stay in the coolness of our own homes. You send us to where the hopeless live, but we are reluctant to leave the comfort of our complacency. You feed us on the peace and joy of your word, but we pull our chairs up to the tables of those who serve false promises. Forgive us, Guiding God. Transform our defiance into discipleship, and our rejection of others into the resurrection of welcoming all people as sisters and brothers in Christ. Help us to love as faithfully as you have always loved us, and send us forth to take the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone we meet. (Silence is kept)

Assurance of Grace

We open our lips and confess our hearts. God hears our words and make us new, sending us out to bring hope and joy to all the world. **We hear the good news, we believe the good news, we will live out the good news. Thanks be to God. Amen!**

Hymn #348 Tell me the stories of Jesus

Children's Time

First Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 23: 1-6

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord.

2Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. 3Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. 4I will raise up shepherds over

them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord. 5The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Second Scripture Reading: Mark 6: 30-34

30The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Reflection By The Rev. Joan Scandrett

In the bible, the image of the shepherd is used to depict a caring person. God is often described as a shepherd of the people in the Old Testament, and kings were anointed not to be rulers as much as shepherds of their people. In our first reading from the Prophet Jeremiah, we hear how, through Jeremiah's words, God is indicting the leaders of Israel because they have neglected their duties to be shepherds of their people, leaving both their kingdoms and their people in disarray as a result. But even though the kings have not done their duty, God will not abandon the people, and promises them that good and faithful shepherds will be raised up so all can flourish once again. This ties in neatly with the second reading which is from the Gospel of Mark, where Jeremiah's promise is fulfilled in Jesus. Just as God cared for the people of ancient Israel when the shepherd kings had not, Jesus had compassion for the people, whom he saw as sheep without a shepherd.

Compassion. That seems to be the word of the day. Compassion has its root in a Greek word meaning "guts" or the seat of feeling. That's where the expression "feeling it in your gut" comes from. You know that feeling - when you react to something that produces a sensation of churning in your stomach region. That's because authentic compassion has a visceral feeling to it. That feeling can hit you suddenly or even painfully. It's not something that is easy to ignore when it hits!

Jesus had been hoping to have a bit of a rest and some down time with his apostles, and yet the need of the people was so great that they followed him in droves to his place of rest. And when Jesus looked out and saw the people, he had compassion for them. He saw and felt that they were lost, lacking guidance, in need of care, protection, tending and nurture. And for Jesus, he didn't just FEEL compassion, he did something about it. Compassion has an element of action - it sends you into motion for the sake of others. And that feeling of the adrenalin rush in your guts won't go away unless and until the energy takes us into places and spaces where there are people who need it so desperately.

That feeling of compassion we get can also be a teacher that provides an opportunity for some radical reorientation of our ministry and our mission, both as individuals and as a church community. This time in the life of our church is an especially important time as we begin to

come together after so many months apart - a time where we have learned and grown and struggled and questioned. It is a good time to ask some questions: Questions like: What aspects of ministry call to your passions, and what might you do about that? What needs in the community need your attention, or the attention of the congregation? Who among you is in need of nurture? What opportunities are there for finding those who are lost; those who need tending of some sort?

It may be true to say that often our compassion has remained complacent. We might feel something, but we either don't know how to act on that, or whether we should step out and do something we have never done before. More than ever these days, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus, and learn, like his disciples did in today's gospel, that compassion is not passive.

There is a story that Mother Teresa told about the time she visited a care home for elderly people in Sweden. It was efficiently run with good food, trained staff, and the people were clean, and treated well. There were about 40 people who lived in the care home. They seemed to have everything they wanted. Yet as she went around she noticed that none of the people ever smiled. They kept looking towards the door. Mother Teresa asked one of the care aides why this was so. She was told that they were longing for someone to visit them. But no one came. There was nothing to break up the routine of their days. Mother Teresa was haunted by what the care aide said. No one came. That was their greatest suffering. All their needs for food, shelter, clothing, cleanliness were met...but they were lonely, sad, lost, abandoned. Like sheep without a shepherd.

Care without compassion is like a lamp with a burned out bulb. As we come back together and look towards the future, it might be good to think about where the light of our compassion needs to shine. Because when we have compassion, it is then and only then that we are truly living the good news.

Hymn of Response #774 God forgave my sin/ Freely, freely

Invitation to the Offering

Our Shepherd calls us to love one another in truth and action. May our gifts reflect our trust in the Shepherd's care. May our offerings show our willingness to love one another.

Prayer of Dedication

God of love, you abide with us; you provide for all our needs and guide us in your ways. Out of gratitude for your care, we bring our gifts before you. Use them for your work of caring, that all may feast at the table of abundance, walk without fear, and drink deeply from the cup of compassion. **Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Good and gracious God, we give thanks for blessings of home and family, of education and nurture, of art and science. For all who make peace, for all who build bridges, for all who have learned to forgive the past, we give thanks. For all good people, and for all lovely things, we bless Your marvellous creation. For our identity in Christ, and for those who have explained this and loved it into our lives, we are truly grateful. For our place in Christ's church, for opportunities to serve and to be served, we say thank You.

Let us ask God for rest for the weary ...We pray for those who are sick and weighed down in body or spirit, for those who are overworked, for those who need a break, for those who near the end of life. May they know Your peace.

Let us ask God to guide those who are lost or perplexed ... We pray for all who need shepherding, and for those who teach and guide others, in their work, in their home, in their voluntary service. May they give and receive Your peace.

Let us ask God to provide for those who are hungry ...We pray for all who hunger and thirst, for relief organizations, for the governments of the world, for those who work on behalf of homeless people May they find peace, create peace, work for peace.

Let us ask God to open places for good news ... We pray for people who do not know how much You love them, and for all who share the gospel. May Your Spirit break down barriers, open hearts, bring peace.

Let us ask God to hear the prayers of our own minds and hearts ... (silence is held)

These and all our prayers we ask in the name of Jesus,
and pray in His words, **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, forever. Amen.**

Benediction

Go out, remembering all God has done for you. Break down the walls of hostility, proclaim peace, and have compassion for all. And may God be with you wherever you go; May Christ Jesus heal you and replenish you; and may the Holy Spirit encircle you and strengthen you. Amen.