

Sunday Worship on July 5, 2026

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 490 God of grace and God of glory
- Prayer for Worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Hymn BOP 441 Can a little child like me

We Listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- Scripture reading: Luke 15:1-7
- Sermon: **A Church for the lost**
- Hymn BOP 634 Will you come and follow me

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 275 Jesus shall reign where're the sun

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

One: Come, let us worship the God who seeks the lost.

All: We come because God first came looking for us.

One: When we wandered, God did not forget us.

All: When we were distant, Christ drew near to us.

One: The Good Shepherd rejoices over every person who is found.

All: We rejoice in the grace that welcomes us home.

One: Come, let us worship the God whose love always reaches farther than we imagine.

All: We gather to praise the One who knows us, seeks us, and calls us His own. Let us worship God.

Praise song – BOP 490 God of grace and God of glory

Prayer of Adoration

Gracious and loving God, we praise you because you are the Good Shepherd who never stops seeking your children. You do not measure people by their success, their failures, or their past, but by your unfailing love.

Thank you for coming after us when we were lost, thank you for calling us by name, and thank you for bringing us home through Jesus Christ. Your mercy is greater than our wandering, and your grace is stronger than our sin.

Fill our hearts with wonder as we remember that we are here today only because you first sought us. As we worship you, shape us to reflect your heart, so that others may experience your love through us.

We offer you our praise and our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of confession (Unison)

Merciful God, we confess that we do not always share your heart for those who are lost or forgotten. Too often, we become comfortable with what is familiar and fail to notice those who are lonely, hurting, or searching for hope. Forgive us for the times we have been slow to welcome, quick to judge, or reluctant to reach out. Fill us with the compassion of Christ, so that we may love others as you have first loved us.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (The Lord's Prayer:)
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 forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Hear the Good News. Jesus tells us that the Good Shepherd searches until the lost sheep is found. That Shepherd is Jesus himself. If Christ has sought you, he will not abandon you. If Christ has welcomed you, you are truly his.

In Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are not forgotten.

You are not abandoned. You are loved, found, and welcomed home.

May the Peace of Christ be with you

Praise song – BOP 441 Can a little child like me

Prayer for Children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

Scripture reading: Luke 15:1-7

"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

SERMON: A Church for the lost

This is a parable that does not easily connect with many of us at first.

One hundred sheep.

One is missing.

And Jesus says, **"Which one of you would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?"**

If I'm honest, my first reaction is simple.

"Yes, I would go."

But then I pause.. **"The ninety-nine... in the wilderness?"**

That does not sound safe.

That does not sound responsible.

That does not sound like a good system.

And maybe that is exactly where Jesus wants us to feel the tension.

Because Jesus is not giving us a management strategy for sheep.

He is revealing the heart of God.

And the heart of God does not operate from efficiency.

It operates from love.

But even deeper than that, Jesus is not asking us to stand outside this story and evaluate it.

He is inviting us to step inside the story.

Because this is not only about sheep. This is about people.

And eventually, it becomes about me.

In most cases, a shepherd would not work alone.

There would be servants, assistant shepherds, and family members.

There would be people who helped carry the responsibility of the flock.

So when Jesus says the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine, he is not describing neglect.

He is describing priority.

But again, the point is not logistics. The point is revelation.

What kind of God is this? And why does he move like this?

Then Jesus tells us why.

Tax collectors and sinners were coming near to him.

And the Pharisees were not celebrating.

They were complaining, v2, **"This [man] welcomes sinners and eats with them."**

This is why Jesus tells this story.

In other words, this is why Jesus is here.

The lost sheep is not an abstract idea.

It is the people everyone else has already written off.

And the shepherd is not a metaphorical figure. It is Jesus himself.

But if we stop there, we miss the deepest part.

Because the question is not only, "Why does the shepherd go?"

The deeper question is, "Why does the sheep matter so much?"

Let me tell you something simple.

I still have an **old BlackBerry**, the first generation of smart phone.

It sits somewhere in my treasure box.

If I tried to sell it, no one would want it. It has no market value anymore.

Maybe a few dollars. Most likely, nothing.

But I would NOT sell it. Not because it is valuable. But because it is mine.

It carries memory.

It carries multiple stories.

It carries a version of me I do not want to lose.

Value is not decided by the crowd.

Value is not decided by usefulness.

Value is not even decided by performance.

The shepherd decides the value of the sheep.

Just like I decided the value of my old BlackBerry — not because it earns its place, but because it belongs to me.

And in this story, the shepherd is God.
So the sheep is not valuable because it is strong.
Sheep is valuable because it belongs.
It belongs to God.

Jesus is not simply telling us what God does.
Jesus is telling us how God sees each and every one of us.
And how God sees is very different from how we see.

We see the ninety-nine and consider it more important, priority, stability.
On the other hand, we see the one and call it loss, inefficiency.
We say, let it go and move on.

But God sees differently. God sees the one and calls it worth going after.

God also sees the ninety-nine and still refuses to forget the one.

And then something begins to shift.
Because at first, we think we are watching the shepherd, from outside this story.
But slowly, we realize that we are in the story.
We are not only observers. We are the sheep.
There are moments in life when we drift without noticing.
Not dramatically. Not rebelliously. Just slowly...

A decision here. A distraction there.
A distance we cannot fully explain.
And before we know it, we are not where we thought we were.

And in those moments, we assume something about God.

We assume that God values the ninety-nine more than the one.
We assume that God stays where things are safe.
We assume that God is disappointed.
But Jesus tells us something else.

God goes after the one. Until he finds it.

Not until it improves.
Not until it proves itself.

Until HE finds it.

And when he finds it, he does not stand over it in judgment.
God puts the sheep on his shoulders. And he carries it.

This is the part we often miss.

The sheep does not walk back on its own strength.

It does not find its own way home.

It is carried — every step, by someone else's strength.

Grace is not just forgiveness.

Grace is being carried when we cannot carry ourselves.

And then Jesus says something almost shocking.

The shepherd comes home. He calls his friends.

And he says, v6, **"Rejoice with me. I have found my sheep that was lost."**

And heaven rejoices. Not quietly. Not politely. But with joy.

Because in the kingdom of God, nothing is more beautiful than something being found.

So where does this leave us?

It leaves us here.

We often think strength is seen in holding onto what we already have.

But in the kingdom of God, strength is revealed in going after what is missing.

We think stability is found in keeping the ninety-nine safe.

But Jesus shows us that love is revealed in going after the one.

And maybe the deepest truth is this.

We are not only the one who sometimes gets lost.

But we are the ones he does not stop looking for.

Even when we think we are fine.

Even when we think we are stable.

Even when we think we are part of the ninety-nine.

The Shepherd still moves toward us.

So today, the invitation is not first to understand the story.

First, receive this.

Not to analyze the Shepherd. But to be found by him.

So let me ask you some questions.

Where are you tired of walking on your own strength?

Where have you drifted further than you wanted to admit?

And where, right now, do you need to stop walking — and let yourself be carried?

Take a moment.

Not to respond quickly. But to be honest before our Shepherd.

Because the Shepherd is not far away.

He is already turning toward you. He's already with you.

And when we are found by God, everything changes.

Not because the situation changes first.
But because you are no longer alone in it.

You are known. You are carried. You are loved.

You did not walk your way back to God. You were carried there.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding us that we were once the lost sheep you came to find, and the ones you carried home. Give us hearts that reflect your compassion.

This week, place one person on our hearts — someone who may be lonely, forgotten, or searching for hope. Give us the courage to take one simple step toward them with kindness, grace, and genuine love.

May St. Andrew's become the kind of church where people experience the welcoming heart of the Good Shepherd.

We ask this in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 634 Will you come and follow me

Prayer for people

Gracious and compassionate God, we thank you for being the Good Shepherd who never stops seeking those who are lost, lonely, or burdened.

Thank you for finding us through your grace, carrying us home, and welcoming us into your family through Jesus Christ.

Today we pray for those in our congregation and community who are carrying heavy burdens of their own. Comfort those who are grieving, strengthen those who are facing illness or recovering from surgery, and encourage those who feel anxious, discouraged, or alone.

Remind them that they are never forgotten — that even now, they are being carried in your loving care.

We pray for those who feel distant from you or from the church. Draw them near through your Holy Spirit.

Help us to be a congregation that notices those who are overlooked, welcomes those who are new, and walks alongside those who need a friend.

Give us eyes to see people as you see them, and hearts that reflect the compassion of Christ.

As many families enjoy the summer season, we ask for your protection over those who are travelling, attending camps, visiting loved ones, or spending time outdoors.

Grant them safety, rest, and renewed joy. Bless children with happy memories, and give parents and grandparents meaningful opportunities to grow together in love.

Finally, shape St. Andrew's into the kind of church that reflects the heart of the Good Shepherd — a church that carries others the way we ourselves have been carried.

May our words, our welcome, and our witness help others discover the hope and joy found in Jesus Christ. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering

Everything we have is a gift from the God who came searching for us — and carried us home. As we present our offerings today, we do so with grateful hearts, knowing that God continues to use His Church to seek, welcome, and carry others home the way we ourselves have been carried. May our gifts become part of that same work.

As we give our offerings, let us glorify Him.

(BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.)

Offering prayer

Gracious and loving God, Thank you for every blessing you have entrusted to us. Receive these gifts as an expression of our gratitude, and as our desire to participate in your mission.

Use them to strengthen this congregation, to care for those in need, and to help others discover that they, too, can be found and carried home by the Good Shepherd. We are yours. Use us. In Jesus' precious name, we pray.

Amen

Song for the Journey – BOP 275 Jesus shall reign where're the sun

Now it is time for us to be sent into the places where God has called us to live and serve. Remember: you did not walk your way back to God. You were carried there. This week, carry that same grace to someone else. Ask God to place one person on your heart—someone who feels forgotten, distant, or alone. Then take one simple step toward them: a phone call, a conversation, a visit, a word of encouragement. It may be the very way they discover they were never lost to God at all. May we become a church that carries others home.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.