

Let Us Love in Truth

When Pilate interrogated Jesus prior to his crucifixion, Jesus responded by proclaiming, “I was born and entered the world so that I could witness to the truth. Everyone who cares for the truth, who has any feeling for the truth, recognizes my voice.” To which Pilate sarcastically retorted, “What is truth?” (John 18: 37-38, *The Message*).

Truth plays a central role in the Gospel of John. The word is applied much more frequently in the Fourth Gospel than in any other Gospel account. In one of most important verses from the Gospel of John, Jesus declares, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (14:6). Truth is also a central theme in the three epistles from John the apostle.

The New Testament Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, is sometimes translated as “unconcealed,” or “revealed knowledge.” But the word, derived as it is from Greek mythology, refers to the river Lethe, which was known as “the river of forgetfulness.” Much like the word asymptomatic means without symptoms, *aletheia* can be translated “without forgetting.” Don’t forget the truth that God loves you and calls you to live in love.

1 John 3:18 suggests that “talking the talk” or even “walking the walk” when it’s easy or convenient doesn’t cut it. Extending an occasional loving gesture, or loving only those who love us, isn’t enough. We are called to love in truth. We fulfill this calling by remaining ever mindful of Jesus’ way of love. We love in truth when Jesus’ command to love unconditionally and inclusively permeates our very being. Perhaps the call to love in truth can be understood as a reminder to continuously love like God loves— without exceptions, and extravagantly.

—Tim McElwee
Wolcottville, Indiana

“Little children, let’s not love with words or speech but with action and truth” (1 John 3:18, *CEB*). **Today’s Bible readings from the lectionary:** Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18.

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Let us love...
in truth and action

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 AM

April 21, 2024

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Brenda Shane, Worship Leader

PRELUDE "Like a Shepherd" (Rasley)

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The Lord is my shepherd, I will fear no darkness.

All: We will love one another, as Christ loves us.

One: Christ, the Good Shepherd, has compassion for all.

All: We will love one another, as Christ loves us.

One: Open your hearts to goodness and mercy today.

All: We will love one another, as Christ loves us.

One: Love, not merely in thought and word, but in truth and action.

All: We will love one another, as Christ loves us.

***HYMN #100**

"Praise him, praise him"

[Verse 1]

Praise him, praise him! Jesus, our blessed redeemer!

Sing, O earth, his wonderful love proclaim!

Hail him, hail him! highest archangels in glory!

Strength and honor give to his holy name!

Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard his children.

In his arms he carries them all day long.

[Refrain]

Praise him! Praise him! tell of his excellent greatness.

Praise him! Praise him! ever in joyful song.

[Verse 2]

Praise him, praise him! Jesus, our blessed redeemer!

For our sins, he suffered, and bled, and died.

He our rock, our hope of eternal salvation,

hail him, hail him! Jesus, the crucified.

Sound his praises, Jesus who bore our sorrows,

love unbounded, wonderful, deep, and strong.

[Refrain]

Praise him! Praise him! tell of his excellent greatness.

Praise him! Praise him! ever in joyful song.

[Verse 3]

Praise him, praise him! Jesus, our blessed redeemer!

Heav'nly portals loud with hosannas ring!

Jesus, Savior, reigneth forever and ever!

Crown him, crown him! prophet, and priest, and king!

Christ is coming, over the world victorious.

Pow'r and glory unto the Lord belong.

[Refrain]

Praise him! Praise him! tell of his excellent greatness.

Praise him! Praise him! ever in joyful song.

***OPENING PRAYER**

Shepherding God, guardian of our souls, you offer us rest in the safety of green pastures. Shower us with your love, and offer us fullness of life in your name. When our spirits are parched, you lead us beside still waters and quench our thirst for righteousness; you restore our souls and heal our battered spirits. Touch our hearts and minds, that your goodness and mercy may follow us every day of our lives. May we abide in your love and grace for all eternity. Amen.

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

Bring your good deeds as an offering to God. Present to the Good Shepherd your firm commitment to care for others in the spirit of Christ. We cannot simply dedicate our money, hiring others to carry out the mission of the church on our behalf. We, ourselves, are called to give leadership and comfort. The giving that God expects includes our time and talents as well as treasure.

We joyfully give as one body, both gathered in his house of worship and gathered through virtual technology. We give by placing our offerings in the plate, mailing to or dropping off at the church, or using Paypal. Together, as we give, we declare our dedication to Jesus and our obedience to serve him.

Offertory

"The Lord's My Shepherd"

(Harris)

***Doxology**

"Praise God from whom"

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Let us pray. How can we express our thanks, O God, for the one who laid down life itself in witness to your love for all people? We are aware that many

have not experienced that love. We see their need, and we want to respond. Use what we offer to you to bring healing and peace to others not of this fold. Draw us together as one flock in the care of one shepherd, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

*Please remember our worship is also on Facebook Live and our website.
Please do not share any personal information you do not want to be made public.
An usher will hold the microphone for you while you share.*

UNISON READING OF PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no
evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and
mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of
the Lord for ever.

CALL TO PRAYER #352 "Gentle shepherd, come and lead us"

Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us,
for we need you to help us find our way.
Gentle Shepherd, come and feed us,
for we need your strength from day to day.
There's no other we can turn to who can help us face another day.
Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us,
for we need you to help us find our way.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING ANTHEM "The Lord Is My Shepherd" (Larson)

SCRIPTURE READING John 10:11-18 NT 103

"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."

MESSAGE "The Good Shepherd Brand" Pastor Twyla Rowe

*HYMN #355 "Savior, like a shepherd lead us"

[Verse 1]

*Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care.
In thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! thou hast bought us, thine we are.
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! thou, hast brought us, thine we are.*

[Verse 2]

*We are thine, do thou befriend us, be the guardian of our way.
Keep thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! hear, O hear us, when we pray.
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! hear, O hear us, when we pray.*

[Verse 3]

*Early let us seek thy favor, early let us do thy will.
Blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! thou hast loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! thou hast loved us, love us still.*

*BENEDICTION

*After the Benediction, you may be seated.
Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.*

*POSTLUDE "I Am the Good Shepherd" (Southbridge)

(Beu, B.J.; Scifres, Mary. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2024 (p. 101, 102). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition; and "Led by Love", Lavon Baylor, p.93)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship  
Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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