

## Bethel Worship Guide – May 3, 2020

Words of welcome from

Doug:

*Welcome to May! This is our 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday worshiping at a distance. Hopefully, we can gather again soon in the same place to worship together. In the meantime, enjoy the spring flowers, green grass, rising temperatures and longer days. In the midst of our challenges and social isolation, God is a God of comfort, protection and tremendous love. Look for God's love in yourself and those you meet.*

Peace verse –

Romans 5:1-2a

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; ...”

Light a candle in your worship space to represent the peace of Christ in your midst today.

Call to worship: Come, you who are weary from the darkness of the night. ***Come, you who are hopeful; who listen for the breath of God in the morning dawn.*** We come to worship the Lord! ***Come with your gratitude for the blessings of the day.*** Come with your pleadings for mercy and release. ***We bring our hearts, minds and voices to worship,***

for God our great Shepherd is gathering us in,  
***and Jesus the Messiah is our Host.*** Let us welcome the Holy Spirit who welcomes us here!  
***Come and worship the living God! Alleluia!***<sup>1</sup>

Song: I owe the Lord a morning song – Hymnal Worship Book #651. Link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neuYAW7qNDM&list=PLI8BSu9H9A\\_9RaUYZaDoFSMc-ck8hEHYc&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neuYAW7qNDM&list=PLI8BSu9H9A_9RaUYZaDoFSMc-ck8hEHYc&index=7)

V.1. I owe the Lord a morning song of gratitude and praise,  
for the kind mercy he has shown in length'ning out my days. V. 2. He kept me safe another night; I see another day.  
Now may his Spirit, as the light, direct me in his way. V. 3.  
Keep me from danger and from sin, help me thy will to do,

so that my heart be pure within, and I thy goodness know. V.  
4. Keep me till thou wilt call me hence, where never night can  
be,  
and save me, Lord, for Jesus' sake; he shed his blood  
for me.

Offering: consider what you will offer to God this  
week.

God our Provider, accept these gifts, tokens of our great love for you.  
Multiply them to do your good work in this church and in your world.  
Amen.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Diane Zaerr Brenneman, ed. *Words for Worship 2*,

#11. <sup>2</sup>Diane Zaerr Brenneman, ed. *Words for  
Worship 2*, #153.

Gospel reading:  
John 10: 1-10

Song: The Lord's my Shepherd – Sing the  
Story #99

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLewiwZc-QE>

V.1. The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie  
in pastures green: he leadeth me the quiet waters by;  
(x2). V.2. My soul he doth restore again; and me to walk  
doth make  
within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's  
sake; (x2). V.3. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear  
none ill;  
for thou art with me; and they rod and staff me comfort still;  
(x2). V.4. My table thou has furnished in presence of my foes;  
my head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows;  
(x2). V.5. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me:  
and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall

be; (x2).

Scripture reading:

Psalm 23

Questions for Scripture reflection: 1. Many people appreciate Psalm 23, and hear in it words of comfort. It expresses the trust

believers have in God. Is Psalm 23 a meaningful psalm for you? Why or why not? Is there a specific phrase or image that resonates with you at this moment in time?

2. The person who wrote Psalm 23 had faced real challenges and dangers – he talks about

dark valleys, enemies, and a soul that needs restoring. His experience may have included the suffering and hostility described right before this, in Psalm 22 (check out 22:1-2, 6-8, 14-21). I've been thinking about what kinds of spiritual practices help Christians be resilient and hopeful in times of hardship. Do you see any clues in Ps. 23 or John 10:1-10 that indicate practices or attitudes that would help us (as "sheep") face times of trouble? (See the end of the reflection questions for Rebecca's ideas.)

3. If you are able, watch the following video (4 minutes) in which a woman applies Psalm 23 to the current situation of living in a pandemic and her feelings, fears, and faith struggles in the midst of this challenge. What stands out to you? "Psalm 23 and Me" by Samantha Beach Kiley.

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doh379tdawQ>

4. The psalms can sound like "old words" to our ears and sometimes use strange metaphors we may not be familiar with (for example, not many of us are well acquainted with the behavior of shepherds or sheep, or want to have oil poured on our heads). The video demonstrated how we can make the psalm a more personal prayer by inserting our feelings and experiences. What metaphors or personal experiences would you use to complete the following phrases?

The Lord is my ... I lack ... Even though I walk through the valley of ... For You are with me; your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ - they comfort me.

5. Can you identify with the feeling of being “socially distant from my Shepherd” or the feeling

of “spinning” (thoughts swirling or feeling like everything is out of control) that is named in the video? What spiritual practices or actions help you when the “what if’s” start flying?

6. The psalmist’s answer to spinning is “He makes me lie down” and “he leads me in right

paths”. But sometimes we resist the Shepherd’s invitation to lie down or to sit at the table prepared for us. We tell God, “I’m fine on my feet.” And “You can’t catch me!” Can you think of times when you resisted God’s help or tried to solve a problem on your own?

7. Can you also recall a time when you told God what you were really feeling, and said “please

catch me”? Did anyone help you in that process? What happened?

8. One comment in the video felt like a confession I could claim: “I lack less than many, but

more than I’m used to.” How do you respond to that sentence? Has the experience of “sheltering in place” and having our lives changed by a public health crisis helped you be more empathetic towards people who, even in ‘good times’ lack what I take for granted? Perhaps praying Psalm 23 and remembering God’s rescue and mercy on us might nurture our sense of gratitude to God and generosity toward others (even the ‘enemies’ who are at God’s table with us!).

Rebecca’s response to Q.2 – some ideas include: allowing the Shepherd’s staff to guide us and keep us from wandering off; practicing Sabbath; listening to the voice of the Shepherd, knowing that voice and following it; being like the writer of Ps. 23 and remembering, recording, proclaiming the goodness God has shown.

Song: Savior, like a shepherd lead us – Hymnal Worship  
Book #355

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrxxmObv2-s> V.1. Savior, like a shepherd

lead us, much we need thy tender care.

In thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use they folds prepare.  
Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! Thou hast bought us, thine we are.  
(x2) V.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.  
(x2) V.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. (x2)

Intercessory Prayer: you are invited to offer your own prayers now, and/or join the Bethel group sharing and prayer time at 11:00 am by calling or logging in to GoToMeeting.

Keep watch, dear Lord, over those who work, or wait, or weep  
this day. Tend the sick, Lord Christ, in particular those suffering  
from Covid-19,

those in under-resourced hospitals and those with no access to  
hospitals at all. Give rest to the weary – including doctors, medical staff,  
parents, pastors

and leaders making difficult decisions. Grant peace to the dying, soothe the  
suffering, and comfort their families and communities. Pity the afflicted, especially  
those living in contexts of poverty, violence

and limited public services for whom the call to stay at home  
involves facing economic loss, hunger or physical danger. Jesus our  
Guide, call each of us to patience, to generosity and selflessness,

to kindness, goodness, and peace so that your name will be known and praised.  
Amen.<sup>3</sup>

Song: Thuma mina – Hymnal Worship Book #434 (a South African text and tune)

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAcZsqH6NYw>

Thuma mina, thuma mina, thuma mina so-man-dla. Send me, Jesus, send me,  
Jesus, send me Jesus, send me, Lord. Lead me, Jesus, lead me, Jesus, lead  
me, Jesus, lead me, Lord. Fill me, Jesus, fill me, Jesus, fill me, Jesus, fill me,  
Lord.

Benediction: -Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make us complete in everything good so that we may do God's will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the *Book of Common Prayer* by the MCC U.S.

Washington Office