



Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Eugene, Oregon  
“At Home” Worship  
Virtual Youth Sunday May 3, 2020  
(Artwork by the Valtinson Family)

*Gathering Around God’s Word*

*Today is Youth Sunday and we thank all of our wonderful WPC youth for contributing to this worship service by recording parts of the service. The best way to view this worship service is online at the church’s YouTube Channel: Westminster Presbyterian Church Eugene. An email with an exact link will be sent out on Saturday.*

*But, if you are unable to access the service online, below is an “At Home” worship guide with portions of the service.*

**Call to Worship**

The Shepherd calls us by name and leads us to abundant life.

**We hear your voice and hasten to follow.**

The Shepherd prepares a table and lavishly pours out grace.

**We hear your invitation and take our place at the feast.**

The Shepherd gathers us in and welcomes us to the house of the Lord.

**We hear your call and give you praise.**

Let us worship God. Let us pray.

## Opening Prayer

Good Shepherd, you call us by name, and we know your voice. Open the gate for us, that we may come and go freely, have life, and have it abundantly. Amen.

## Opening Hymn *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* #187

## Call to Confession

The grace of God overflows for us through Jesus Christ who came into the world to save us all. Let us confess our sins to God.

## Prayer of Confession

**Holy and merciful God, in your presence we confess our failure to be what you created us to be. You alone know how often we have sinned in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love. By your loving mercy, help us to live in your light and abide in your ways, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## Assurance of Pardon

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone, a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

## *The Word*

## Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are

read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

## Scripture Readings

### *Old Testament Reading: Psalm 23*

- <sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;  
<sup>3</sup>he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

### *New Testament Reading: John 10: 7-15*

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

## Reflection

The Rev. Marta Z Ukropina

This morning I wanted to do something a little different since we are celebrating Youth Sunday in a way we never have before. Normally, we would all be gathered together in the sanctuary, being led by our youth and children as we worship God. I am so glad to be a part of a denomination that values the gifts of people of all ages. We do not tell children that they are too young to lead us in worship because we believe in a God that welcomes children and calls them by name. I am almost certain that I would have never become a pastor if it hadn't been for churches who nurtured me and allowed me to be up front leading worship from a very young age. From children's nativity pageants, to children's choir, handbell choir, serving as a liturgist, participating in Youth Sundays, singing as a soloist, to preaching as a senior in high school I always felt welcome and encouraged to lead worship. I cannot imagine growing up in a tradition that would not allow it. And therefore, when I became a pastor, I knew I would always do whatever I could to make sure each and every child felt welcome in God's church. And this included leading worship. I have always enjoyed letting even the youngest among us serve as liturgists!

I am saddened by the fact that we are not together today, but I am deeply thankful for modern technology which has helped us stitch together a "virtual" Youth Sunday.

When I saw that the lectionary was Psalm 23 and John 10, I immediately found myself back in my days as a chaplain at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. The chaplaincy program there is one of the best—each unit in the hospital had a chaplain and one of us was always on call onsite, 24-7. Our daily duties included visiting with each and every patient and their families in our respective units and we also provided pastoral care to the hospital staff. When we were the on-call chaplain we were part of the trauma team responding to each call brought in to the ER both in the trauma room with the patient and the medical staff and also in the waiting room with the family. We were there to provide a non-anxious presence in an atmosphere that was anything but relaxed.

Another one of our roles was leading daily hospital chapel time. Hospital chapel time was broadcast over closed circuit tv to each hospital room. There was communion, there were prayers, there were scripture readings, but most importantly, I think, there was Godly Play.

In seminary, the church I attended used Godly Play as part of their children's curriculum and I had been through a training so it was familiar to me. But I never imagined the importance of Godly Play until I used it in a hospital room. In addition to the televised chapels where the camera was directed on the Godly Play area, we also would take Godly Play lessons to children in their rooms. Talk about feeling the Spirit of God at work! My favorite was the lesson on Psalm 23 mixed with John 10 which allowed children the space to wonder and think about their feelings about what was going on in their lives. It allowed them a time to encounter God in their hospital room—a space to feel comforted and loved.

If you aren't familiar with Godly Play, it is about worship and it is about children. It is a way that children experience God while learning about God and encountering God in sacred space. It is a way to allow children to learn, to wonder and to allow God to transform. But, Godly Play has been used for adults and children alike and I would argue is NOT exclusively for children. It is hard to explain because it truly is an experience—an experience of God.

Each Bible story is told in a quiet, deliberate manner with plenty of pauses and quiet time. Sometimes, we feel like we need to fill the quiet space when teaching children, but in fact, allowing silence and reflection and time for wonderment is often what is needed and where true learning takes place.

So this brings me back to my comment about doing something a little different today. I unfortunately do not have the Godly Play materials at my disposal, but I am going to utilize the method in a truncated way. Before we begin, I invite you to quiet your mind and body and invite God to speak to you. (If you are reading this sermon instead of watching the video, it will be different as I will be using slides as I tell the story. If you can, I encourage you to watch the video )

The picture below, is the basic set up for a Godly Play story with children. It is simple, yet effective. Each of these items are added slowly, deliberately and with great care while the story is being told.

I am going to do this story digitally today, but I wanted you to see what it usually looks like. <sup>1</sup>



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*An At-Home, Godly Play Reflection adapted into picture form using the slides from the video. They are to be read slowly and deliberately, allowing time for the words to sink in. Silence is encouraged.*



**“Once there was someone who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things that people began to follow him. But they didn’t know who he was. So one day, they simply had to ask him, and he said....”**

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<sup>1</sup> Godly Play story taken from *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman, 1989 with permission to use during the COVID-19 pandemic online for worship

**"I am the Good Shepherd. I know each of my sheep by name."**



**"And they know the sound of my voice. So when I call my sheep from the sheepfold, they follow me." I walk in front of the sheep to show them the way.**



**I show them the way to the good green grass...I show them the way to the cool, clear, still water....**





**And when there are places of danger...  
...I show them the way to pass through....**



**....so they can come safely home to the sheepfold."**

## **I WONDER...**

You are invited to close your eyes...

**In this point in the video, everyone will be invited to close their eyes for a moment of wondering and reflection:**

**I wonder if the sheep have names?....**

**I wonder if the sheep are happy in this place?...**

**I wonder if you have ever had to go through places of danger?...**



I wonder how the sheep feel with the Good Shepherd?...  
I wonder how the Good shepherd feels about the sheep...?  
I wonder...

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During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are being challenged in a lot of new ways. There is hardship and fear all around us. We long for the Psalmists words of a shepherd to lead us through the places of danger and to places of comfort, sustenance and abundance. When our lives have been upended, what better time than to ground ourselves in God's Word—the word that never changes, but is always steadfast. I wonder how God spoke to you today?... I wonder how that will change you as you go about your week?... I wonder?... In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

### *Responding to God's Word*

**Affirmation of Faith**      from a Brief Statement of Faith

**In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

**Dear God, Thank you for your beautiful creation and for the earth you have made: for the beauty of the mountains and the plains, for forests and drylands, for oceans and rivers and for all living**

**things. Help us to take care of it so that future generations can enjoy the earth you have made.**

**Loving God, We pray for your people all over the world especially those who are hurting and sick. We pray for those who are suffering, for those who have lost a loved one, and for those who are scared and alone.**

**Be with our world as we are affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic. Help us to know you are always with us even when life is confusing and scary. Thank you for all the people who are helping—especially medical professionals.**

**Thank you for teachers and leaders in our world who are helping us through this time. We pray for our city, state, country and world—that people may feel connected even when we are apart.**

**We pray for people who do not have homes. For people who are struggling to make ends meet. For people who are hungry. We pray that they may find help in times of great need and that we may do what we can to provide that help.**

**We pray for people who have been affected by natural and human made disasters. Help them as they recover.**

**Thank you, God, for our families and our friends. Thank you for our church family and we pray for all of us during this time that we cannot be together. Help us to feel your peace, love, and comfort. We pray all these things through Jesus Christ who taught us to 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, forever. Amen.**

***Sending of God's Word***

**Closing Hymn: *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need #803***

**Charge and Benediction**

**Remember that God is always with you.  
God loves us all and is our Good Shepherd.  
God takes care of us.  
He leads us beside the still waters.  
He comforts us when life is tough.  
He is with us when we are scared, lonely and sad.  
Therefore we should not be fearful.  
God has called us each by name.**

**God loves us.  
He will lead us through the dark valleys.  
His rod and staff will comfort us.  
His goodness and mercy are always with us.  
And we will dwell in God's house forever.  
Thanks be to God.  
Go in peace. Amen.**