



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 11, 2025



“Because He Lives”

We Know Jesus Is Trustworthy and True

How do you know you can trust Jesus? Simple. Jesus followed up his words with action. Jesus promised he would die to save you from your sin. He did. Scripture promised the Savior would rise from the dead, proving that payment for sins was complete. It happened. Jesus always does what he says. His every promise is fulfilled. Jesus once illustrated that point in the metaphor of the Good Shepherd. All shepherds use words, calling to the sheep hoping they will follow. What sets the Good Shepherd apart is the fact that his words are followed by action, including his willingness to lay down his life for his sheep. Because he lives, we know Jesus is trustworthy and true.

First Reading³

Acts 13:15,16a, 26-39

Paul preaches an “encouraging” message of Biblical proportions and eternal consequences. The Good News is that the Messiah has come. He is the Savior sacrificed for sinners, the conqueror of death witnessed by his followers. Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, verified by the Father himself. He has the power and authority to shepherd his people Israel.

Second Reading³

Revelation 7:9-17

The paradox of Christ is that he is both Lamb and Shepherd. He saves his flock, by shedding his blood as the Lamb sacrificed for sin. This is the Good Shepherd we needed: God in the flesh, sacrificed for our atonement. But now, washed in his blood, the white robed host is led by the Shepherd-Lamb to the springs of living water and a life where everything that once was wrong is made right forever.

Gospel³

John 10:22-30

Christ’s words to his enemies were as simple as they were stark: You do not believe that I am the Christ because you are not my sheep. As a shepherd dividing goats from the sheep, Jesus drew a sharp distinction between these unbelievers questioning him and the believers who followed him. They did not know him, would not follow him, and would be lost forever. But for his disciples, for us, Christ said they knew him, they hear him, they follow him, and they will live forever. All this can only be true because our Good Shepherd is God in the flesh.

Psalm of the Day⁴

Psalm 23 A

“I Will Live in the House of the LORD”

The Church sings Psalm 23 in services that honor Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. It is frequently sung at funerals, calling to mind the presence of the Lord as Christians go through the valley of the shadow of death. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 23 is a psalm of thanks, in which a Christian heart praises and thanks God for teaching it and leading it in right ways. Christians recognize that they are sheep, and their true Shepherd, Jesus, comforts and protects them in every need through his holy Word. With that Word, the Good Shepherd grazes us in fresh grass and at cool waters, while the table, cup, and all are Old Testament references to divine worship.”

Gospel Acclamation

John 10:14

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." Jesus spoke these words among of the Pharisees who were challenging his authority after he healed a man born blind. Those who believe in Jesus as the Christ know him as their Good Shepherd and enjoy the close, loving, relationship (the Good Shepherd knows his sheep) that can't be replicated by the false shepherds who try to steal the flock away from Christ.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Good Shepherd who laid down your life for the sheep. Lead us now to the still waters of your life-giving Word that we may abide in your Father's house forevermore; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

552 "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" (Henry W. Baker, 1821-77)

The six stanzas of this hymn correlate closely to the six verses of Psalm 23. In this hymn, we contemplate the good care that our Good Shepherd gives us. Even as we often stray away from him "confused and foolish," and obviously do not deserve his mercy, God surrounds us with his gracious care. Truly his "goodness fails (us) never."

Church Year Season¹

Easter

After forty days of repentance and prayer, the Church bursts forth in jubilant praise at the Resurrection of our Lord. The alleluias and glorias which were muted for Lent ring out again as the Bride of Christ welcomes her Bridegroom back from the dead. Easter is as the pinnacle of the Church Year, the oldest festival and season celebrated by the worshipping Church. For a full week-of-weeks (49 days) the Church celebrates the resurrection of Christ on the Sundays of Easter which culminate on the 50th day, Pentecost.

Colors & Symbolism

White

White is the color of our Triune God and heaven. It also symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity and innocence. We receive these blessings through faith because Christ, our righteousness Savior, has forgiven all our sins.

Traditions & Customs

The Paschal Candle

Paschal, meaning "having to do with the Passover," is a word associated with Easter. It was at the conclusion of the Jewish Passover Festival (the "Pasch") that Jesus rose from the dead and proved himself to be the true Passover Lamb whose blood removes sin and death (Ex 12; 1 Cor 6:6-8). The candle is lit for services during Easter to symbolize that Christ is alive and lives among us. The candle is also lit for Baptisms and funerals, reminding us of our resurrection to eternal life.

Nain Paraments

Easter

Superfrontal: *Alleluia* is taken from a Hebrew word which means, "Praise the LORD." It is a word of joy and gladness and most commonly used in the Psalms (e.g. 103). An ancient custom is to refrain from using the term during Lent in order to distinguish the penitential nature of that season from the joy and hope filled nature of the Easter season that follows. The vines and vegetation branching out from the *Alleluia* represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God's children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: The doves flying in front of the cross represent purity, innocence (Matthew 10:16), as well as spiritual and eternal rest (Psalm 55:6). When the dove has an olive branch or leaf in its beak, it is a symbol of hope and peace (Genesis 8:11). Each of these blessings and more come by Jesus' death on the cross and through the gift of faith (Galatians 1:3,4).

Pulpit antependium: The cross is formed by the Greek letters Chi (X) and Rho (P). Chi and Rho are the first two letters in the Greek word for Christ (Χριστός). This ancient symbol represents Jesus and his office as the Messiah, the anointed King of kings and Savior of the world (Matthew 16:16). The vines and vegetation branching out from the cross represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God's children, the branches (John 15:5).

¹ Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year A". Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year B". Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of "Planning Christian Worship: Year C". Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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