

# Order of Service – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024, Easter 4

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## GATHERING

*Here, we cross a threshold – we move into a sacred space, and a sacred time, a space and time ‘set apart’ for the purpose of communal prayer.*

*During the service the congregation is invited to stand and sit for different parts of the service, however you are welcome to stay seated if you wish.*

*A quiet retreat room is available for those who need it.*

*The worship area is wheelchair accessible.*

*There is a children’s corner with books and activities.*

## Opening verse

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Ps 23 :1

## Greeting

**Saide**

*The leader greets the people in God’s name and calls us into a worshipful space and state. The bible is carried in and Christ Candle lit – we usually stand (if we are able and comfortable to do so) while this happens.*

Good morning, please come and find a place to sit as we prepare for worship. ...

And now let’s stand and sing Alleluia, just because it’s still the Easter season, as we welcome the Word and Light.

## Brunswick Alleluia

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*Alleluia alleluia. Alleluia.*

*Alleluia alleluia. Alleluia.*

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Julia Potter, created for Lent 2018. Brunswick Uniting Church. Used with permission

## Call to worship

**Saide**

Come let’s take a moment to breathe together  
feel your feet on the floor, roll your shoulders, flex your fingers.  
Let’s breathe into this time of worship.

Come let us worship God who is love everlasting  
the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep  
the Spirit who waits in the silence, the quiet centre.

## Song – Come and find the quiet centre, IECS.10

*We usually stand during the songs.*

*Now let’s sing of that quiet centre, a place of dreaming, of speaking and naming. Let’s sing*

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*1. Come and find the quiet centre  
in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter,  
find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter,  
clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter,  
be at peace, and simply be.*

2. *Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith begun.*

3. *In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare!*

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SONG: [Come and find the quiet centre](#), by Shirley Erena Murray, from [In Every Corner Sing](#),  
Hope Publishing Company, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

## Acknowledgement of Country

Saide

*We acknowledge the people of the land on which we worship*

We acknowledge and respect  
the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation,  
the traditional custodians of this land  
since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land  
is not ours to own, but to look after;  
and that if we listen,  
we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves  
to work for justice, reconciliation,  
and care of the earth.**

## Welcome and Introduction

Saide

*People are welcomed, those present and those online. The themes of the service are laid out.*

Welcome to worship this morning. Christ is Risen! **He is risen indeed!**

It is good to be here with you, gathered in this sacred space and reaching out with love online  
as we continue our celebration of the Risen Christ through the Season of Easter.

Today we will reflect on Jesus as the Good Shepherd, reading from John's gospel and singing  
Psalm 23. We welcome Jenne Perlstein as our preacher. Jenne is a member of our  
congregation, regular liturgist and an interfaith minister.

Our prayers of the people have been adapted from a reflection on Psalm 23 offered by  
President Sharon Hollis.

I'm Saide leading worship with Cath, Jenne, Lyn, Meg, Ray, the musicians led by Natalie and  
well-supported by the AV team. Please stay on after worship for morning tea through this door  
and into the hall. It's a lovely space to sit, eat and chat.

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Saide

*We pray in adoration, praising and adoring God for being God; and in confession, bringing before God the incompleteness and brokenness of the world and our lives. In response we hear God's word of healing grace.*

*Let's take a moment to breathe together again, to settle into a time of prayer. You might like to think about what to do with your hands as we pray – open in your lap, clasped lightly together, placed on your heart, in an act of self-embrace wrapping you round, holding the hand of another person near to you. Let's breathe and pray.*

Loving God, you created the world and all that is in her.  
With love you created still waters and green pastures.  
With love you gave your only Son to lead us in right paths.  
Forgive us when we stray from these paths.  
Forgive us when the dark valleys overwhelm us.  
Forgive us and love us back into wholeness.

Jesus, Risen Christ, you are the Good Shepherd, lover of all.  
Loving us in our imperfection, you lay down your life for us.  
Loving us you show us the way to love others, to be a community.  
Forgive us when we are so unable to love ourselves  
that we are unable to love others, to love our neighbours.  
Forgive us and love us back into wholeness.

Holy Spirit, breath of love and compassion, you shape our living.  
Breathing love you shape us into a community, Jesus' disciples.  
Breathing love you comfort us in our dark valleys.  
Forgive us when we fail to reach out in love and care.  
Forgive us when we fail to see the fullness of God's mercy.  
Forgive us and love us back into wholeness.  
Amen

## Word of Grace

Saide

The psalmist sings  
*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.*

Let us take and breathe these words into our hearts and into our lives,  
Confident that in the name of Jesus, the Risen Christ our sin is forgiven.

**Thanks be to God**

## HEARING AND RESPONDING

*We hear the story of Jesus, Wisdom Incarnate (in the gospels); the story of God's dealings with Israel (in the Old/First Testament); and the story of God's people through history (in Acts and the New Testament letters). As we hear this story, we are reshaped and formed by an alternative perspective on life – the perspective of the gospel, the good news. The story is told through proclamation, which may include reading the Scriptures, reflection on Scripture, symbolic action, art, music, multimedia resources and silence.*

*Hearing the story requires a response. We respond by making an offering (of ourselves, our gifts, our money, and our prayers for others).*

## Gospel Reading – John 10:1-18

Meg

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

“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.”

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

**Thanks be to God**

## Early Word

Cath

In the reading we just heard about the shepherds and the sheep, the gatekeeper calls all the sheep by name in order to lead them out. I'm wondering what names we might give these sheep that reflect something of who they are.

The good shepherd knows their sheep and their sheep know them. I wonder if there's someone in your life who you feel really knows you. And what does that feel like? That gives us some idea of what it is to be known by God, but God knows all of us even the parts of us we want to hide.

Let's hear another story about hiding sheep and where each of the sheep are known by their colour.

[Where is the Green Sheep?](#)

## Song – Are you a shepherd, MV 126

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*1. Are you a shepherd, good shepherd who leads us  
safely through dangers, while calming our fear?  
Are you a father who shelters and feeds us,  
shares in our laughter and wipes away tears?*

*Yes, you are shepherd, parent and teacher,  
but you are greater than all that we know.  
Holy and living, loving and giving,  
God, you are with us wherever we go.*

*2. Are you a mother, good mother who bears us.  
comforts, protects us and helps us to rest?*

*Are you teacher who daily prepares us,  
challenging students to offer their best?*

*3. Great, gentle shepherd, forever beside us,  
lead all your children in paths that are right.  
Great, loving parent, wise teacher, you guide us.  
We want to love you and bring you delight.*

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SONG: [Are You a Shepherd?](#), Ruth Duck, 2002; from [More Voices](#), United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502

## **Book of Psalms – Psalm 23**

**Lyn**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.  
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.  
You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
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.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word  
**Thanks be to God**

## **Reflection**

**Jenne**

## **Offering with Song – You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd**

**Saide**

*We usually remain seated for the singing of the offering song, standing together when the offering is carried forward.*

In gratitude for the Word spoken and heard, for God's steadfast love, we offer our gifts of money, time and love.

You are welcome to place an offering of money in the bowls as they come around, or by direct debit using the details on the screen. Signing up for regular direct debits is also welcomed and encouraged.

We'll remain seated while the offering is being collected and then I'll invite you to stand. Let's sing of Jesus, Lamb and Shepherd, new words to a familiar tune.

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*You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.  
You, Lord, are both prince and slave.  
You, peacemaker and swordbringer  
Of the way you took and gave.*

*You the everlasting instant;  
You, whom we both scorn and crave.*

*Clothed in light upon the mountain,  
Stripped of might upon the cross,  
Shining in eternal glory,  
Beggar'd by a soldier's toss,  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are both gift and cost.*

*You, who walk each day beside us,  
Sit in power at God's side.  
You, who preach a way that's narrow,  
Have a love that reaches wide.  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are our pilgrim guide.*

*Worthy is our earthly Jesus!  
Worthy is our cosmic Christ!  
Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.  
Worthy still your peace and strife.  
You, the everlasting instant;  
You, who are our death and life.  
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.  
You, who are our death and our life.*

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SONG: You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd, Sylvia Dunstan (1955-1993),  
from Voices United – the Hymn and Worship Book of the United Church of Canada, Hope Publishing Company.  
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## **Offering Prayer**

**Saide**

Jesus, Lamb and Shepherd, we offer our gifts of money  
for the work of God's mission in this community and beyond.  
We offer the gifts of our hearts and hands as witness  
to your steadfast, sacrificial love so that all people may know your name  
and that they, like we, may know your embrace and your call.  
Amen

## **Prayers of the People**

**Ray**

*We offer prayers for the world, for Christ's people in the world, and for those in need. After the prayer the Christ Candle is taken to the chapel space where people are invited to light a taper for their own prayers at the end of the service.*

*Our prayers this morning have been adapted from a reflection on Psalm 23 offered by Rev Sharon Hollis, President of the Uniting Church in Australia. Sharon writes Psalm 23 'is a psalm that speaks of God's goodness, God's mercy and God's provision. It is a psalm that has been prayed for millennia by the people of Israel. It is a prayer Jesus prayed as he grew up and went about his ministry. It is also a prayer that speaks of suffering so profound it is experienced as of the darkest valley.' Sharon concludes the reflection encouraging us all to continue holding our nation and world in prayer and to hold each other in loving care.*

*After the prayers I will take the Christ Candle to the chapel space where you are welcome to light a taper for your personal prayers during the final song or after the service.*

*Let us pray*

God of the darkest valley,

We think of those who were killed in a shopping centre in Bondi, those who were wounded and those who witnessed the violence as they were walking through.

We remember the priests and people of Christ the Good Shepherd Church who seek peace and forgiveness in response to the violence in their sacred meeting space.

We call to mind the people of Ballarat struggling with the violent death of three women, and women and non-binary people everywhere who wonder if they are safe to go about their daily business.

We think of those in our communities with mental illness; who will now fear how they are seen, will worry that people will turn from them afraid they too might be violent. They walk this dark valley daily.

Ever before us is the darkest valley of Gaza, the war in Ukraine, violence, war and hunger in countries we barely hear of where people suffer without end in sight.

We know God that you come to us at Easter not as one removed from the suffering of the world but as One who has walked this darkest valley before us and has transformed the darkness. The One who cried at the grave of a friend, prayed for suffering to pass him by, laid down his life, died with a cry of God forsakenness on his lips. You walk with us in the darkest valley and call us to love and peace.

Because you have trod this path before us, we can hope that maybe, just maybe, healing will come to brokenness, we will see peace where it seems hopeless, those most in need will know mercy.

Because you have trod this path before us, we can hope that maybe, just maybe, we will find ourselves comforted and made whole and can participate in your healing of a broken world.

Amen

## BEING SENT

*Having heard the word and shared the meal together, we are sent forth on God's mission of love. We are again on a threshold, encouraged to go into the world to continue the worship of God in our daily living.*

### Notices

### Saide

*We share the life and work of our community with each other as we prepare to be sent out.*

It's time to share the news of the community. Please come and line up to my right, say your name and share your news in a sentence or two. The Olive Press provides lots of information each week, if you aren't on the mailing list please fill out one of the cards in the Gathering Space and give it to me out at the FUNdraising stall after worship, we are raising money for our Olive Way ministry. The BUC Arts committee is hosting a Banner Making session out in the hall as well in preparation for an installation for the Tower Room Window during the Week of Climate Action.

### Sending Song – Lead me on, NCYC07.3

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*Though I walk through the valley  
Of the shadow of death  
I will fear no evil  
While I feel your breath  
Though I may stumble  
And fall in disgrace  
Shine your light and lead me on*

*Chorus (echoes in brackets)*

*(Lead me on)  
Like a child (Lead me on)  
Walkin' down (Lead me on)  
Through the dark and shadows  
Lead (Lead me on)  
Lead me on (Lead me on)  
Lead me to the other side*

*Surely goodness and mercy  
Shall follow me  
And I will live in your house  
As long as life can be  
Though I may stumble  
And fall in disgrace  
Shine your light and lead me on*

*Chorus*

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SONG: Lead Me On, by Paul Gioia, from NCYC 07 Songbook,  
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## Blessing and Sending

Saide

*The leader gives a blessing to the people for the next stage of the journey.*

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

As we continue through the fifty days of Easter, between resurrection and Pentecost may you know the ever abiding, ever present love of God in your lives.

May you hear the Good Shepherd calling you from your dark valleys.

May you feel the breath of the Holy Spirit lifting you up and sending you out.

Amen

## Thank yous

Thank you for joining us, and thank you to...

Liturgist:  
Saide Cameron

Bible readers:  
Lyn Anderson  
Meg Orton

Early Word:  
Cath James  
(Minister of the Word)

Reflection:  
Jenne Perlstein

Prayers of the People:  
Ray Cameron

Musicians:  
Natalie Sims  
(co-ordinator)  
Anthony Hinds  
Colin Hunter  
Matthew Lees  
Nicole Lowe  
Bronte Potter

Editing / Production:  
Jane Allardice  
Ray Cameron  
Saide Cameron  
Michael Cameron  
Marcelo Mendoza

Postlude Song: Lead Me On, by Paul Gioia, from NCYC 07 Songbook, © 2006 Uniting Church in Australia Used with permission  
Musicians: Elaine Potter, Helen Burnham, Julia Potter

Images:  
BUC Library  
Brokebank Mountain stills

## Closing verse

I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me. John 10:14