



**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WALKER
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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“No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!”

April 26, 2026 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

“By the Gate”

Worship Leaders:

Pastor: Michael Small

Liturgist: Joanna Aamodt

Greeter: Wendy Paul

Special Music: Sue Grage

Keyboard: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

Tech: Ace Diehl (Video), Samuel Batson (Audio)
Spiritual Life, Chancel and Communion Preparation

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

RINGING OF THE HOUR

† HYMN

“Savior like a Shepherd Save Us”

#252

CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by Psalm 23)

One: The Good Shepherd is the gate. Let us enter with thanksgiving and praise!

All: The Shepherd restores our souls, satisfies our needs, and leads us on the right path.

One: The Good Shepherd is the gate. Let us live with courage and conviction not fear and timidity.

All: Through valleys and storms, chaos and confusion, threats and concerns, the Shepherd comforts us with power and strength, love and compassion, hope and peace.

† For those who are able, please stand.

One: The Good Shepherd is the gate. Let us worship in the presence of the Holy One!

All: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all our days of my life. Let us dwell in God's presence forever!

A TIME OF CENTERING

(During this time of centering, open your hearts to God; be in the present, here and now.)

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

One: God who is Shepherd, Gate, and Way, we join together as a community in your presence and in your protection. Shield us from apathy and isolation. Fortify us against resignation and despair. Nudge us toward justice and righteousness in your name. As we gather to worship you, may we be transformed by your love, strengthened in grace, and rooted in faith for your glory and your kingdom come. Amen.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Shepherd of our lives, like sheep, we wander and stray. We come to you for sustenance yet distance ourselves from your realm when you require more from us. We bite one another with words that cut and attitudes that reflect more apathy than care. We lie down and become stuck when you would expand our territory and sphere of belonging. We give you thanks for not giving up on us and continuing to lead us by your Spirit. Give us courage and confidence to do your will and to love with our lives. We devote ourselves anew to your teaching, to community, to the sacramental life, and to prayer. Lead us in the ever full and renewed life in Christ. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

(Each person can take this time to surrender to God privately anything weighing heavy on their heart.)

WORDS OF GRACE

One: Beloved, the Shepherd cares for you and rejoices whenever you turn back to follow God's holy way. Life in the promise of glorious, flourishing life and the kingdom of God manifested on earth. There is no detour you may take where the Shepherd cannot find you and urge you back into their loving embrace. You are redeemed and restored in Christ. Receive the goodness of God whose grace is sufficient and available for you to begin anew.

† PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also, with you.

† For those who are able, please stand.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Sue Grage

Focus Scripture: John 10:1-10 *Priests for equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (pp. 702-703). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

¹ “The truth of the matter is, whoever doesn’t enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber.

² The one who enters through the gate
is the shepherd of the sheep,
³ the one for whom the keeper opens the gate.
The sheep know the shepherd’s voice;
the shepherd calls them by name
and leads them out.

⁴ Having led them all out of the fold,
the shepherd walks in front of them
and they follow
because they recognize the shepherd’s voice.

⁵ They simply won’t follow strangers—
they’ll flee from them
because they don’t recognize the voice of strangers.”

⁶ Even though Jesus used this metaphor with them, they didn’t grasp what
he was trying to tell them.

⁷ He therefore said to them again: “The truth of the matter is,
I am the sheep gate.

⁸ All who came before me
were thieves and marauders
whom the sheep didn’t heed.

⁹ I am the gate.
Whoever enters through me will be safe—
you’ll go in and out and find pasture.

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal
and slaughter and destroy.
I came that you might have life
and have it to the full.

REFLECTION

“Abundant Life and Flourishing Love”

HYMN

“Spirit of Love”

#58

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER (*Please use words that are most familiar to you*)

† For those who are able, please stand.

Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Sue Grage

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

One: Community of faith, let us hold true to the ethos of the early church and hold “all things in common” (Acts 2:4). Let us share our abundance to enjoy shared life, to meet the needs among us, and to demonstrate our commitment to the kingdom of God.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

DOXOLOGY: *(as collection plates come forward)*

Tune #780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

One: Generous God, may these gifts bless our life together, fortify our ministry, and transform our community. Receive them as we give them—with gladness and thanksgiving. Amen.

†HYMN

“Peace I leave with You, My Friends”

#249

PARTING WORDS

One: Beloved, as you go, note the encouragement of the Shepherd:
The Gate is open and with you.
In your coming and going,
The Shepherd leads you.
Go, have life and have it abundantly.

POSTLUDE

† For those who are able, please stand.

WI-FI – “Guest” Scan QR Code for Internet Access



By the Gate: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Easter Year A was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.