

Easter 4      5/11/14  
John 10:1-10    A

*"I AM THE DOOR. IF ANYONE ENTERS BY ME, HE WILL BE SAVED AND WILL GO IN AND OUT AND FIND PASTURE ... I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT ABUNDANTLY."*

A "cast down sheep" is an old English shepherd's term for a sheep that has turned over on its back and cannot get up again by itself. In your mind's eye, can you see that pathetic sight of poor a sheep lying on its back with its feet in the air trying frantically to get up but not being able to do so? That helpless sheep lies there, lashing about in frightened frustration. It is necessary that the shepherd find the "cast down" sheep right away because predatory animals know that a cast down sheep is an easy meal.

Have you ever felt like a "cast down sheep"? Cast out of the Garden of Eden, sin has made us "cast down sheep." We are frightened. We frantically kick our feet, trying to get on our feet again. But, we just lie there, cast down, easy prey to the devil and this fallen world.

How true the words of Job are, "Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble." "In the world," said Jesus, "you will have tribulation."

Trouble. Tribulation. Trials. Tears. We are sinners in a sinful world. The adversities and afflictions of earthly life we all know too well. The river waters flood our homes, our bodies wear out, our eyes dim, our ears go deaf, our children turn away from the God of their youth, people steal and destroy the property God has given to us, wagging tongues destroy our good name with gossip, and the wicked, far from being punished, seem to prosper.

Because of sin, we humans are mortal and frail. We are subject not only to the troubles of this present age, but always, always, the grave lies before us. Like "cast down sheep" we cannot right ourselves. We are simply helpless.

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. This Sunday teaches us that Jesus is our Good Shepherd and we are the sheep of His pasture, who are led and cared for by our Good Shepherd. Today, we hear our Shepherd say,

“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture...I came that they may life and have it abundantly.”

In our Gospel lesson, Jesus tells how a shepherd would herd the sheep of his flock and prevent them from being lost, stolen, or hurt. During the daytime, the shepherds would take the sheep out to graze in the countryside. The shepherd led the sheep to good pasture, protected them from predators and rustlers, guided them to water, looked after their hurts and wounds, and, most importantly, kept any sheep from straying from the flock.

At the end of the day, the shepherds gathered all their sheep together for the night in a common sheep pen. The sheep pen had high stone walls with only one gate. The shepherds rotated as the gatekeeper, taking turns spending the night to protect the sheep from wolves and from thieves and robbers that try climbing over the wall to hurt and harm the sheep.

Early in the morning, the shepherds would come back to fetch their sheep. The shepherd would call for his sheep. The sheep of each flock would hear their shepherd's voice and follow him. The sheep would follow only their shepherd's voice.

II. The Good News for us is that when we were cast down sheep, Jesus came to be our Good Shepherd.

"I am the good shepherd," Jesus said. He has not left us as orphans. He has not abandoned us to death and the grave. He has not left us as "cast down sheep."

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly,” our Shepherd says. How different Jesus is from the voices that prey upon us to deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, great shame and vice, death, and hell. Jesus did not come to this earth to steal and kill and destroy. He came give us life, eternal life, and abundant life, with joy and meaning for each day that we walk by faith through this valley of the shadow of death.

“The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” That’s what Jesus did for us on Good Friday. Peter in our Epistle said it this way, “He

Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.” Our Good Shepherd laid down His life so that we would be saved from sin and death.

We celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday in this season of Easter as a reminder to us that our Shepherd has defeated our greatest enemy, death itself. Sin, death, and Satan have been defeated forever by the Easter resurrection of our Good Shepherd. The evil one cannot hold us captive anymore. We have been freed from the misery and curse of sin. The grave has lost its sting. Jesus has ascended to make a place in heaven for you.

Yes, even though He has ascended, He has not abandoned us. Even though we walk through this valley of the shadow of death, He is with us, His rod and His staff continue to comfort us. “The sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.”

III. Our Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name.

In the service of Holy Baptism, the pastor addresses the parents of the child brought to the font, “How is this child to be named?” Today, we heard that question answered, “Gage.” That question is asked so that we know – with all certainty -- that the forgiveness won on the cross and the victory of Easter morning now belongs to Gage. Gage is now a sheep of the Good Shepherd’s pasture.

In baptism, the Good Shepherd called you by name. He has called, gathered, and keeps you to Himself. You are one with Him in life and in death. You hear His voice and follow Him. In our Epistle, Peter says it this way, “For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther said that the Church was nothing more than the sheep who hear the Shepherd’s voice. The sheep pen is the Church of God. Here, in Christ’s Church, you are safe in the Good Shepherd’s arms. He is the door, the way, that God has provided for you to enter into the sheep pen of Christ’s own body, where there is eternal refuge and safety, peace and quiet, joy and delight for us helpless sheep.

Sheep need the safety of the sheep pen to protect them from the threatening perils and dangers of the world. There, they are safe. Like sheep, we are protected from the threatening perils in the world around us by the sheep pen of the Church. That is not to say we are protected by the walls of a building, rather we are protected by the **Word of God** that brings us to faith in Christ and keeps us in that faith.

In Bible Class, we have been studying Noah and the Flood. God shut Noah in the ark and it saved him. The wind and the waves beat upon and threatened him, but he was safe in the ark. So it is with us, Dear Saints of God. In our baptism, God shut us into Christ, one with Him in death and in life. The wind and the waves will beat upon us and threaten to overwhelm us; Satan, that roaring lion, will roar and try to frighten and unsettle us; the world will try to entice us with its pleasures and treasures; but, we are safe in Christ.

This is our confidence. To prevent us from becoming "cast down sheep," God has brought us to faith in Christ and keeps us strong and firm in that faith in the hearing of His Word and the eating and drinking of His Body and Blood. So, in faith we pray, "Lead us not into temptation." And, God has promised to hear us. In these words, we pray  
"that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are daily attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory" (6th Petition).

And when our last hour comes, God will deliver us from this vale of tears to the green pastures and still waters of the house of the Lord, where we will dwell forever.

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# Concordia Lutheran Church

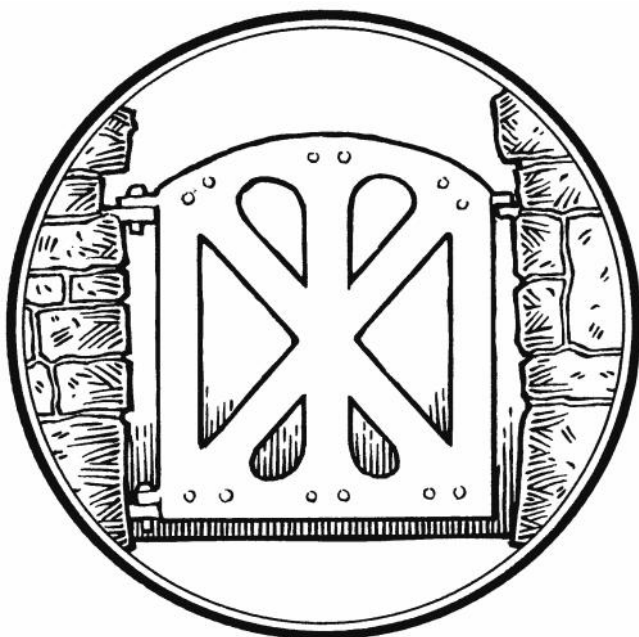
*The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod*

801 Beacon Lane

Beulah, North Dakota

Rev. Toby H. Heller, Pastor

May 11, 2014



*We know that Christ being raised from the dead  
will never die again; death no longer has  
dominion over Him.*

*I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own  
and My own know Me.*

*Romans 6:9; John 10:14*



**First Reading:** Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.



*The Handchimes will ring "Mighty to Save" following the First Reading.*

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Peter 2:19-25 (ESV)

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

**"Alleluia"**

p. 156

**Holy Gospel:** St. John 10:1-10 (ESV)

*[Jesus says] "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."* This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them.


So Jesus again said to them, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and 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."*

**Hymn of the Day** # 711

**Sermon** "That They May Have Life"

**Prayer of the Church**

**Offering**

 *The Handbells will ring "Songs of Worship and Praise" during the gathering of our morning offerings.*

**"What Shall I Render"** p. 159

**Service of the Sacrament** p. 160

**Distribution Hymns** # 740, 620 (st. 1-4), 625

**"Thank the Lord"** p. 164

**Post-Communion Collect** p. 166

**Benediction** p. 166

**Closing Hymn** # 735



## In our thoughts and prayers,

† On Mother's Day, we thank God for the blessing of motherhood and the great things He did for us through our mothers;

† Gage Walter, baptized today;

† Our nursing home residents, that God would keep them under His gracious care;

† For favorable weather, that all agricultural endeavors may result in an abundant harvest.



## Stewardship of Offerings and Attendance

Attendance: 102 Offerings: \$3,295.20

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.” Our heavenly Father wants us to grow into the image of His Son, to follow in His steps. Jesus suffered for us not only to redeem us, but also to show us what love looks like—to leave us an example of self-giving, sacrificial generosity. “Let us ever walk with Jesus, follow His example pure.”

Please join us for a baby shower honoring  
*Gage Walter Mittelsteadt*  
Sunday, May 18, 2014  
2 o'clock in the afternoon  
Concordia Lutheran Church

Everyone is invited to attend and welcome  
Gage into the family of Concordia.

Hosted by LWML

**Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!** Welcome to worship in this season of Easter as we gather to rejoice that Christ has overcome death and the grave and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15). Visitors, please sign our guest book and worship with us again soon!

**This morning**, we rejoice that Gage Walter Mittelsteadt,



the son of Tiffany Mittelsteadt & Evan Morast, is born again for all eternity in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. In obedience to our Lord's most gracious promise, Gage is baptized so that, by the power of the Holy Spirit in the water and the Word, his sins are

forgiven, he is delivered from death and the devil, and given the gift of eternal life. "[God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)."

**On Mother's Day**, we celebrate how our mothers

confessed their Christian faith to us. How well it is for us to listen to the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther in the explanation of the 4th commandment:

"The perversity of the world God knows very well.

By means of commandments, therefore, He reminds and impels everyone to consider what his parents have done for him. Then everybody recognizes that he has been nourished and nurtured by them when otherwise he would have perished a hundred times in his own filth. The

wise men of old were right when they said 'God, parents, and teachers can never be sufficiently thanked and repaid,' he who views the matter in this light will, without compulsion, give honor to his parents and esteem them as those through whom God has given his all blessings" (Large Catechism).





**Muffins for Moms:** The young women of Concordia will be serving muffins this morning in honor of Mother's Day. Please join us!

**Thank You:** Today is the last Sunday of Sunday school for the spring. We would like to thank our Sunday School teachers for their loving and dedicated service. The family of Concordia greatly appreciates your work!



**Noah And The Flood:** Please join us for Bible class this morning as we continue our study of Genesis 6-9.



**Potluck Recognition:** Please join us Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> 10:30 a.m., for potluck brunch to recognize our 2014 high school graduates.

**Vacation Bible School** will be June 1-5, Sunday - Thursday, 5:00 -7:30 p.m. If anyone has questions or is willing to help, please contact Anne Rosenow, 880-1473, or Joslyn Frey. All Children are invited to join us!

**The May calendar,** Pray for us calendar, birthday and anniversary sheet and the March council minutes are in the black stacking trays in the social hall.



**The May Human Care Project** is collecting pasta for Women's Action & Resource Center. Please place your items in the shelf unit in the entry way. Thank you.

Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion in which we joyfully receive Christ's Body and Blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins. As we celebrate the Sacrament, we also give public witness that we are in complete agreement with the denomination's doctrinal teachings at whose altar we commune. Therefore, we ask that only communicant members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commune with us. All guests are asked to talk to Rev. Heller before coming to the altar to receive the Sacrament.

## † This Week at Concordia †

- Sunday      8:30 am    Divine Service  
              9:30 am    Sunday School/Bible Class  
                          \* Last day of Sunday School  
              11:00 am *Worship @ Glen Ullin*
- Tuesday     10:15 am   Holy Communion @ KRCC  
              1:30 pm    Naomi Guild
- Wednesday  7:00 pm    Chime Practice  
              7:30 pm    Bell Practice
- Sunday      8:30 am    Divine Service  
              9:30 am    Bible Class  
              10:30 am  Potluck Brunch Recognition  
              11:00 am *Worship @ Glen Ullin*  
              2:00 pm    Mittelsteadt Baby Shower

### Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM—12:30 PM

Church: 873-4388    Parsonage: 873-4223

[revheller@westriv.com](mailto:revheller@westriv.com)

[concordiasecretary@westriv.com](mailto:concordiasecretary@westriv.com)

Website: [www.concordiabeulah.org](http://www.concordiabeulah.org)

*Please use a pew card to record your worship and/or  
Communion attendance this morning.*