



# Neighborhood Perch Church

Sundays around Cabarrus County

*This service is designed for use by a small gatherings of God's people outside of the assembly of the full community. It draws from the Eucharistic tradition, but it is not a sacramental meal. All Christians are called to bless, and this includes blessings of food and drink shared and the people gathered. The people assemble with greetings and conversation. Candles are lit by individuals as they arrive, accompanied by a moment of silent prayer. One person acts as the leader to keep the flow of the worship moving. Prayers and readings are divided among the rest of the group.*

*The leader opens with Call to Worship*

## **Call to Worship**

*One* The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. – Psalm 23:1

## **Opening Prayer**

*An appropriate prayer is offered to set the tone for worship. Collects from The Book of Common Prayer, especially the collect appointed for the day, are always appropriate.*

## **Music Offering**

*Please feel free to hum along! Singing in a mask is discouraged by health officials due to concerns for higher CO2 rebreathing when singing.*

## **The First Reading:**

### **Acts 4:5-12**

*One* The rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" Then Peter,

filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you,  
the builders;

it has become the cornerstone.’

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

## **The Second Reading:**

### **John 10:11-18**

*One* Jesus said, “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.”

## **Teaching**

*In small groups of approximately three, remaining at appropriate physical distance, choose questions to discuss for approximately twenty minutes.*

Peter and John have just been arrested after healing of a crippled man at the Temple and teaching about Jesus’ resurrection. Peter before the gathered court about Jesus as the source of healing, and what those authorities have been party to: the rejection and killing of Jesus. Peter hasn’t always been so courageous. But now in the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter carries out his call to witness.

- What are other examples you can think of – perhaps modern examples – of Christians speaking truth to

power when it was dangerous to do so?

- Is there an experience you can share of something you did that felt impossible or frightening where you sensed the help of the Holy Spirit?
- The passage from John has echoes of Psalm 23 declaring we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. How do we know we are loved? By our friends and family? By our God?
- How can we shape our lives to reflect this Love in all that we say and all that we do?
- Inherent in the passage from John is a message of protection and care that we see in Psalm 23. What does this combination of deep care and God's desire for "one flock" say to you about God's love for you?
- In the midst of vivid imagery, Jesus' commitment to unity may be overlooked. What do you need to "lay down" in your life in order to bring about the kind of unity Jesus describes?

## **Prayer of Blessing**

*Before leaving your small groups, standing and remaining at appropriate physical distance, spend approximately five minutes praying for one another in turn. Begin by asking what each person would like prayers for and then have the other members of the group lift them to God.*

## **Prayers of the People**

*The whole group gathers for prayer. Prayers may be formal and prepared ahead of time, or come forth from the group at the time of worship.*

*Prayers are always offered for:*

- *The Universal Church, its members, and its mission*
- *The Nation and all in authority*
- *The welfare of the world*
- *The concerns of the local community*
- *Those who suffer and those in any trouble*
- *Those who have died*

*One* Jesus, you are the good shepherd of your people. Hear the cry of your flock as we pray, "Good Shepherd, *receive our prayer.*"

Good Shepherd, you call us to follow where you lead. Give us ears to hear and know your voice. Give us the courage and strength to lay down our lives for one another, as even you laid down your

life for us. *Silence.*

Good Shepherd,

*All* **Receive our prayer.**

*One* Good Shepherd, gather to yourself the people of the world so there will be one flock under your reign. Forgive us for our hatred and divisions.

*Silence.*

Good Shepherd,

*All* **Receive our prayer.**

*One* Good Shepherd, you have blessed us with green pastures and still waters – places in your world where we find rest and renewal. We thank you for the beauty of the earth. *The people are invited to add their thanksgivings, followed by silence.*

Good Shepherd,

*All* **Receive our prayer.**

*One* Good Shepherd, even when wolves attack, you never leave your loved ones; even in the valley of the shadow of death, you are present. Be with all victims of violence. Comfort them in their distress. *Silence.*

Good Shepherd,

*All* **Receive our prayer.**

*One* Good Shepherd, you love us so much that you call us each by name: we pray for the healing of our brothers

and sisters in your name. *The people are invited to add their petitions, followed by silence.*

Good Shepherd,

*All* **Receive our prayer.**

*One* Good Shepherd, you are our salvation. Grant all who have died a dwelling place in your house forever.

*Silence.*

Good Shepherd,

*All* **Receive our prayer.**

## **Confession**

*One* Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

*All* **Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*One* Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy

Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

*All* **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 for ever. Amen.**

## **Blessing of the Meal**

*This portion of the service follows the shape of the Last Supper, and therefore may sound familiar and much like the Eucharist. However the elements are not consecrated, they are blessed, something all Christians are called to do. In times of pandemic, each person brings their own bread and wine. It is the time of prayer together that is shared, not the food. Begin by having the person who will lead the prayer over the bread to invite each person to make ready the food they brought. When all are ready, the prayers are offered.*

*One* On the last night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took bread and he blessed it and shared it with his

friends, for God who loves us, feeds us. As God's people ate manna in the wilderness and were satisfied, so we share this bread with Christ, and with one another. May it be for us bread from heaven, strength for our bodies, balm for our souls, and may it empower us to be Christ's body in this world. *Silence.*

*One* On the last night that Jesus gathered with his friends, he took wine and he blessed it and shared it with them. God who made us delights in us, and gives us good gifts to delight our tongues, and give joy to our souls. As Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that would not fail, so Jesus offers us the same. May this wine be for us the holy drink of heaven, and may quench the thirst of our souls.

*All* **Holy and life-giving God, we thank you for the bounty of your Creation laid before us. We ask you to bless it, that it may be to us a holy meal. We give thanks for all those who labored so that it might sustain us. Through it may you give us the strength to be your good stewards; to care and tend your creation, and to care especially for our siblings – all the people of this world. We ask these things by the grace of Jesus**

**Christ and in power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*The gathered join in eating. As this requires removing mask, care must be taken to ensure proper physical distancing continues. Music may be appropriate.*

**Music Offering During the Meal**

*Please feel free to hum along!*

**Sending Blessing**

*One person offers a blessing on the group gathered as they are sent into the world to do the work God has given each to do.*

*All*    **Amen.**

*One*    Go in peace to love and serve the  
          Lord

*All*    **Amen.**

*This service includes the work of The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, The Rev. Josephine Robertson, All Saints Episcopal Church, Bellevue, WA and Renew Community House Church.*