



# First Parish of Westwood UCC

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Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, *Interim Pastor*  
Rev. Richard Edens, *Interim Pastor*

April 25, 2021  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of EASTER

## Gathering

### PREPARATION

It is God's companionship that transforms every situation. It does not mean there are no deathly valleys, no enemies... Psalm 23 knows that evil is present in the world, but it is not feared. Confidence in God is the source of new orientation.

W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*

### RINGING OF THE HOUR

Jesse Aguilar with Fina Aguilar

### WELCOME AND PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Richard Edens, Interim Pastor

### CALL TO WORSHIP IN MUSIC

*Sheep May Safely Graze* from Cantata 208

J. S. Bach

Dr. Sarah Tocco, Director of Music

## Encountering the Word

### THE DAY'S PSALM

Reader: Charlie Domina

Psalm 23, *New Century Psalter*

*Psalm 23 is perhaps the best-known text of the entire book of Psalms. Throughout our tradition it is commonly used at funerals due to its comforting imagery. However, this is also a psalm for everyday living.*

God is my shepherd, I shall not want,  
God makes me lie down in green pastures,  
and leads me beside still waters;  
God restores my soul,  
and leads me in right paths for the sake of God's name.  
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 God my whole life long.

### LESSON

John 10:11-18, *NRSV*

*The image of Jesus as a shepherd is rooted in the understanding of the crucifixion-resurrection so central to John's gospel. Like a shepherd who willingly gives his life in care of the flock, Jesus chose to give up his life in faithfulness. In the exercise of his faithful ministry Jesus fulfills God's promises.*

[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."

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

>>> continued >>>

MESSAGE

Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, Interim Pastor

PASTORAL PRAYER CONCLUDING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, Interim Pastor

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

ANTHEM

*The Lord My Shepherd Guards Me Well*

James L. Bain

Dr. Sarah Tocco, Director of Music

*The Lord my Shepherd guards me well, and all my wants are fed:  
amid green pastures made to lie, beside still waters led.  
My careworn soul grows strong and whole while when God's true path I tread.*

## *Giving Thanks in Response to the Word*

OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD AND TO ONE ANOTHER

Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, Interim Pastor

Until that day when we gather again in the sanctuary, please send your tithes and gifts for First Parish to the church office at 252 Nahatan Street, Westwood, MA 02090.

Let us pray. *Use what we offer to you, gracious God, to bring healing and peace to others not of this fold. Draw us together as one flock in the care of the one shepherd, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.*

## *Sending*

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, Interim Pastor

BLESSING IN MUSIC

*Go in Peace*

First Parish Choir

Dr. Sarah Tocco, Director of Music