

KTF 2025 May 8

Dear Ones,

The Fourth Sunday in the Easter Season (which lasts 50 days, remember!) is designated “Good Shepherd Sunday.” It is the point on which we pivot away from stories about Jesus’ Resurrection and toward the “what comes next”—Jesus’ farewell and ascension, and preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

There are a lot of reasons why the early church picked up those images of the Messiah as a Shepherd. David’s story set the stage for such an understanding. He left the flocks in the fields to become king (although not quite so quickly and easily as that sentence would suggest!) The prophets regularly used the metaphor of the shepherd to confront kings who were not taking good care of their people. They reminded the king that he was, more than anything else, a servant leader, one willing to lay down even his life to protect the flock under his care.

I think this metaphor is somewhat limiting in our 21st century context. Shepherding is not a common occupation, and even those who do have flocks use very different methods for managing them. I haven’t found an equivalent metaphor for our time that works quite as well.

So instead I’m going to share a story of something that happened last weekend, that made me very aware of how I can best tend to those in my care. On Saturday evening, while many of our Chapel Kids were at the Perrys’ house, we went to see how the chicks are doing. (The Perrys adopted the last three of them.) One of our chapel kids was trying to hold one of the chicks, but he was a little nervous about it, and the chick kept getting away. I said to him, “You know, I get a little nervous around them, too. Maybe we can be brave together.” I cupped my hands around his, then had someone place the chick in his hands. My hands helped his hold the chick, tightly enough to keep his hands around it, loosely enough that neither he or the bird felt constrained. There was something about it that felt holy. I thought about the times when God has offered a gentle hand around mine, to help me learn to hold something.

As many of you heard on Sunday, my mom’s health has worsened and she has chosen to continue with hospice care. She is at home with me, and nothing is imminent. However, I ask you all to keep us in prayer as we move through this final time. I know I will feel your love and support surround me in the same way my hands surrounded that child’s. I am so grateful for you all.

In the meantime....*keep the faith*,
Nancy+

THIS SUNDAY’S READINGS

Acts 9:36-43 * Psalm 23 * Revelation 7:9-17 * John 10:22-30

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Allan Crane (5/11) * Allison Long (5/14) * Holly Stuhr (5/15) * Allison Whitney.(5/17)

PRAYER REQUEST

Our beloved Martha Eaton has, with her family, made the decision to suspend any further treatment of her cancer and enter hospice. (She was quite insistent that I be clear she didn’t make the decision all on her own, she discussed it with her family first.) Things are progressing quickly, so we expect she’ll reach the end of her journey soon. Her family is staying with her in shifts to keep her comfortable. They are planning an early 95th birthday party for her on Sunday. If you would like to drop a card in the mail to her, the address is: Box 51 Waterford ME 04088.

CREATION CARE TIPS

An Imperfectly Perfect World

As I potted a hundred or so impatiens clippings to give to God's people at Christ Church to celebrate Earth Day, I had plenty of time to ponder the sameness and differences of those clippings. Some had perfect leaves, but a poor root system.. They went back into the jelly jar to give them another week to grow. Some had an impressively complex set of roots, but looked bedraggled. Some were short; some were "leggy," a term gardeners use to say the plant has grown like Jack's beanstalk, a little too tall and too thin. Some had damaged leaves, or too few leaves, or one large leaf and several small leaves, making them appear lopsided – making them look strange. Most had flower buds, but no hint of the color the flowers would be. Each was perfect, yet imperfect. And so is our world.

"In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth... And God saw that it was good." The Bible doesn't say, "And it was perfect."

In last Sunday's service, Eucharistic Prayer D includes this prayer: "Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance...You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures." That sounds like a directive. That we might serve all your creatures. Not on a platter, but as servants, as workers, as caretakers. But also we are told to rule those creatures. How does one rule and serve all those creatures? Perhaps the answer is to keep them in balance. Or perhaps we need to put things back in balance. If an invasive species – or a waste product unintentionally added to the environment by human hand – prevents a species from thriving, growing, or surviving, the organisms that depend on the native species will be endangered; and the system will be thrown out of balance.

We're taught that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. It's actually Newton's Third Law of Physics. Unfortunately, the opposing reaction can be very unequal in biology. A splinter in your finger can turn the area red, then full of pus, then affect the entire hand. That's not equal to the size of the splinter! A little pollution can kill off the one population of insects that a bird species feeds on, and that flowers rely on for pollination. It can throw off the balance of nature in that region. An annual average warming of just one degree can be the "straw that broke the camel's back," and cause a certain plant or animal to cease to exist in a region; or it can cause a plant or animal that couldn't thrive in that place to grow, uncontrolled.

In the beginning, creation was good. As stewards of the world God created, can we work to make this imperfectly perfect world less imperfect?

– Patty Watts, Christ Church Earth Keeper

Hurt not the earth—neither the sea—nor the trees. Revelation 7:3

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spring Cleanup TODAY after church (rain date 5/18) Rake, pull weeds, clear gravel and sand...if you're splitting plants in your garden we can add them to bare spaces!

Community Concepts Cooperative Project: Care Packages for Moms, to be delivered on/around Mother's Day. Ideas for things to donate: "shampoo/conditioner, gift cards, snacks/treats, cozy socks, pens, little notepads and such. Anything that feels comforting."

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