



**Middlebury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

**April 25, 2021
Fourth Sunday of Easter**

PRELUDE

I Know That My Redeemer Liveth (from "Messiah") G.F. Handel

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Manzi

INVOCATION

LORD’S PRAYER (UNISON)

**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 and ever. Amen.**

[We use “Father” and “trespasses,” but please use whatever words bring you closest to God.]

CALL TO CONFESSION (Based on 1 John 2:1-2) Rev. Manzi

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty and merciful God, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open us to a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow evermore in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep. Amen

(Time for individual silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (based on 1 John 4:9-10)

Hear the good news: “God’s love was revealed to us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son

to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” Friends, here and believe the good news; in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READINGS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

Rev. Manzi

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name’s sake.
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 the LORD
my whole life long.

John 10:1-18

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go 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.

“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.”

SERMON

Sheep, Wolves, and Shepherds

MUSICAL OFFERING

How Great Thou Art arrangement by Dan Forrest
Len Beard, tenor

Joys and Concerns and Pastoral Prayer

Katrina will share joys, concerns and witness to your brothers and sisters that she received prior to today's service.

OFFERING AND DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

How Great Thou Art

POSTLUDE

The Trumpet Shall Sound (from "Messiah") G.F. Handel

DOING GOD'S WORK

The Congregation, *Ministers in the World*
Church Officers & Members of our Boards & Committees

Staff:

Katrina Manzi, *Minister*

Donna Obarowski, *Choir Director*

David Obarowski, *Organist*

Valerie Beard, *Christian Education Coordinator*

Jeanine Bonaventure, *Office Administrator*

Diane Barnard, *Asst. Treasurer*

Rebecca Trosan, *Nursery Attendant*

Howie Gay, *Sexton*