

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Today's Readings:

First Reading: Acts 4:1-12

Epistle: 1 John 3:16-24

Holy Gospel John 10:11-18

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, Lays Down His Life for the Sheep

The Lord Jesus is *"the good shepherd"* who *"lays down his life for the sheep"* (John 10:11). His life is not taken from Him, but He lays it down willingly, of His own accord, because He knows and loves the sheep. As the One sent by the Father, He has the *"authority to lay it down"* and the *"authority to take it up again"* (John 10:18). So has He done, and now He continues to love and serve as the Good Shepherd of the sheep by the voice of His Gospel. He thus calls all people into the fold of His Church, so that there may be *"one flock, one shepherd"* (John 10:16). That is why the apostles *"were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead"* (Acts 4:2). Since *"there is salvation in no one else,"* His voice rings out to this day through the preaching of His name, *"for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). His voice comforts our hearts against all condemnation and gives us courage to *"love one another"* and *"to lay down our lives for the brothers,"* as He laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16, 23).

About the Lord's Supper: At this Lutheran congregation we believe that in this Sacrament our Lord gives us not only bread and wine but His true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust His words, earnestly repent of their sins and forgives as He forgives us. If you share our belief, we welcome you to join us at the Lord's table this morning. If you have not yet received instruction in this Sacrament, the pastor would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you the meaning and significance of the Lord's Supper before you commune.

Note: Grape juice is in the middle of the tray, wine on the outside

Our Bulletin Cover Comment

The Good Shepherd does not withhold His own life for His sheep. He laid down His life on Good Friday as a sacrifice for our sins in order to take it up again on Easter Sunday. He did it all of His own authority for us. Therefore, we know that when He takes our lives up like the Good Shepherd that He is, we are in good hands that will carry us safely to eternal life.