



Fourth Sunday of Easter - B
April 25, 2021
Camping Sunday

God is my shepherd,
There is nothing I shall lack.
You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,
You lead me beside peaceful waters;
You revive my spirit,...



Theme - Comfort in the Wilderness
A Service for Camping Sunday

I think we are here, now.
Of course, we're here. We are always here and we are always now.
Not always.
When are we not here? When are we not now?
Ummm... In our imagination. In our memories.
Hmmm ... Right you are. This looks like a good spot, then.

Welcome and Announcements

† This Sunday is Camping Sunday but it seems we have been sent indoors again. Perhaps we can imagine the day that we will again enjoy the freshness and smells of the outdoors and camping. If we were children, we might make a fort out of sofa cushions and blankets. The Folks at home can too ... Young, middle and old, we all can. Perhaps when the weather warms, we can set up a tent in the yard or deck or balcony.

† With Camping Sunday and Earth Day both this week, the Sanctuary is adorned with imaginings of outdoors. If you wish, dig out your old fire blanket and let your spirit drift back to a youthful past, confident that with the increasing numbers of Folk being vaccinated, our future will include

what we remember or imagine for now.

† **Newcomers please sign our guestbook**

† Special requests may be made through Facebook

† Trinity is Welcoming, Open, Inclusive and Accessible.

– Trinity is an Affirming Congregation

† **A Stay at Home Order has been issued. We will not meet in person for worship at least until the order is suspended.**

† Services will be posted to [Facebook](#). You will find a window to our Facebook Page on our [Website](#). You will also find a link to our [Bulletin Page](#). Services are rebroadcast on COGECO (Your TV) the following Sunday 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.

† **As a consequence of the current Stay at Home Order and the possibility that our situation may remain fluid for a while afterward, we have postponed our Annual General Meeting until 13 June 2021.**

† **Stewardship Update**

– May - Annual Geranium Sale

■ Purchase Orders will be taken in April for delivery scheduled for Saturday, May 29. We will follow health regulations and have the pick up in the parking lot.

† Compost sale at REAL

– Plan to pick up a bag or two of compost.

– Further update! **Sale is now scheduled for Saturday and Sunday May 22 & 23.**

■ Delivery of compost is Friday May 14.

● Larry and his sons will pack some bags over the week as can other households, each one at a time so we are in compliance with regulations.

● Best Mushroom Compost ever!

■ **30 litre bags for \$10.00**

Today's Service draws from [*Pass It On! A Service for Camping Sunday*](#) by David Root and Nancy Rouble, Board members for Camp McDougall in Northern Ontario

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Smiths Falls is located on the traditional territory of the Algonquin peoples dating back countless generations. We are grateful for our neighbours and recognize the opportunity to exercise the Ministry of Reconciliation

Introit 579 "The Church is Wherever God's People"

The church is wherever God's people are praising,
Singing God's goodness for joy on this day.

The church is wherever disciples of Jesus
Remember his story and walk in his way.

The church is wherever God's people are helping,
Caring for neighbours in sickness and need.

The church is wherever God's people are sharing
The words of the Bible in gift and in deed.

*The church is wherever God's people are praising,
Singing God's goodness for joy on this day.*

The church is wherever disciples of Jesus

Remember his story and walk in his way.

Wendy does such a great job with the hymns. We talk about the church not being just inside the four walls of a building. I remember that when we speak of outreach and service to the community but I sometimes forget that church is defined by any small group in God's name and

presence. Maybe that's because we spend so much time indoors. We are used to being surrounded by an artificial environment, artificial lights, temperature and humidity all controlled and regulated by us. Everything is measurable. We know its beginning and its end. We work very hard to remove the mystery in our life. We make everything ... predictable and the same ... all under our control. If something happens that we do not expect, we call it broken. So, we are so used to the artificial that we confuse it with natural. All this human made knowing and certainty sounds like living in a box.... Outdoors is so much different than that. Everything goes on forever. It is quiet and full of sound at the same time. You can pick out the sound of a single croaker or listen to the whole wetland choir - croakers, peepers, chirpers and singers. The sun can be warm on your face while the breeze is cool on your back.

It's like

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.*

That's my favourite Psalm ...

I know

We should start.

Call to Worship

Creator God, the spark has kindled a fire.

We gather for its warmth and light.

Your love is the warmth that fills our hearts.

Your love lights the way.

First, we experience the warmth and light of your love,

And then we pass it on.

Pass it on.

Opening Prayer

Creator God,

We thank you for bringing us together in this time,
to celebrate the recreation, the re-creation,
of enjoying the fun and community of camping.

We thank you for all the people in our lives.

We also thank you for all of creation; the hills and trees,
the rocks, the water, the animals of field and forest.

We thank you for your love for us;
the love that we in turn share with one another.

Open our hearts to receive your word,
to learn more about creation and your love.

Guide us in your love and the spirit of creation
so that we might be examples for others to follow. Amen.

Hymn 577 "I've Got Peace Like a River"

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in-a my soul,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.

I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul.

I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul.

Time With Children

What are you doing?

Ummm ... We're camping, so I'm eating trail mix for my health.
Are you eating out of a flower pot?

Yes

Why?

You would not like it if I ate potting soil from one of your good
bowles.

Your eating dirt?

Not dirt, soil, potting soil. I mixed it with the Trail Mix.

Oh...

Did you know that everybody eats a peck of dirt before they die. So,
I'm catching up.

Catching up?

A peck is two gallons or nine liters. I have never kept track of how
much dirt I've eaten. Nine liters is more than I realized, so I am catching
up.

Catching up?

Yup, Catching up.

Umm why?

For my health.

Have you been taking life advice from the Internet, again.

Maybe.

I see.

I read an article in "The Scientist" - The Influence of Soil on Immune
Health ... Recent work in humans and mice highlights how exposure to

environmental microbes helps protect against allergies and other inflammatory diseases.

During the Second World War, Finland lost a large swath of territory to the Soviet Union. After the war, the Finnish side became modernized, while people on the Soviet side maintained a traditional lifestyle. And by our time, according to a study carried out by researchers at the University of Helsinki, the rate of allergies on Finland's side of the border was significantly higher than that of people living on the Russian side.

A group of researchers wanted to know why.

The group suspected that the differences in allergy incidence between the two sides of the Finnish-Russian border might have something to do with exposure to environmental microbes. Researchers had recently formalized the biodiversity hypothesis, arguing that the total biodiversity—and correspondingly, microbial diversity—of people's living environments influences human health via changes to the composition of the microbiome. A loss of biodiversity, they reasoned, was to blame for the dysregulation of the human immune system and thus the increase in allergic and inflammatory diseases observed in developed nations around the world.

Apparently, children on the Russian side were healthier because they were covered by microbes from the soil. They tested their theory with mice and found that exposure to the soil made the mice healthy. After seven weeks there was a change in their gut microbes that reduces overall stress in the whole animal. "There was direct colonization into the gut . . . from the soil." So the mice were healthy because they ate soil. "there is more and more evidence that there is a direct contribution of the soil to human health,"

Didn't the study conclude that "exposure to diverse bacteria in the environment is one way to achieve the health benefits of spending time in nature." ... That just being in nature, walking and in the grass ... being normal but close to the earth in nature was enough ... like would gardening work?

Umm... the article was like two pages long,... so I didn't read to the end.

Did you read the Bible selections for today?

Maybe.

The Psalm and the Gospel both speak of lambs and shepherds. They are about how God loves us like a shepherd loves their lambs but they also remind us how much of life in the Bible takes place outdoors, in the wilderness. Our whole story starts in a garden. Maybe we are healthier in nature because we were a part of nature from the very beginning.

We celebrate Camping Sunday and remember Earth Day was this week.

And even with the limitations due to COVID, playgrounds and parks and the great outdoors are still open. Especially as the weather warms up, the outdoors is safer than the indoors. Nature has a way of protecting us, even if it seems that we often do not take care of nature.

Children's Prayer

Dear God,

We thank you for nature and the fact that we are part of it. We thank you for the mysterious way creation takes care of us. Help us to be better at taking care of nature.

Prayer of Reconciliation

Dear God,

We love your creation,

yet sometimes refuse to care enough for it.

We love our neighbours as you have taught us,

yet sometimes we hurt them

or refuse to allow our differences to transform us.

Your love for us surrounds us in every way,

yet sometimes we fail to acknowledge it.

Out of your timeless greatness, dear God,

please keep loving and forgiving us.

Guide us to do, say, and serve according to your will.
Guide us to live in respectful relationship with creation.
And when there are temptations that lead us away from you,
we ask that you set us aright, yet again.
Amen.

Assurance of Blessing

God is the beginning, and through God all things have come into being. God is life and that life brings abundant freedom and live-giving peace for all people. God's love shines in the most difficult times, and nothing can separate us from that love.

Scripture Psalm 23 (VU749);
1 John 3:16-24;
John 10:11-18

Psalm 23 (VU749)

Refrain -

My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

God is my shepherd,

There is nothing I shall lack.

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

You lead me beside peaceful waters;

You revive my spirit,

You guide me in right pathways for your name's sake.

Refrain -

My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, You are with me,

Your rod and your staff are my comfort.

You spread a table for me in the sight of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup is overflowing.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

And I will dwell in God's house my whole life long.

Refrain -

My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

1 John 3:16-24

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

John 10:11-18

“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.”

Meditation "He's Got The Whole World"

He's got the whole world

In his hands

He's got the whole wide world

In his hands

He's got the whole world

In his hands

He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the tiny little baby

In his hands.

He's got the tiny little baby

In his hands.

He's got the tiny little baby

In his hands.

He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got you and me brother

In his hands

He's got you and me, sister

In his hands

He's got everybody here
In his hands

He's got the whole world
In his hands.

Reflection My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

God is my shepherd,

There is nothing I shall lack.

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

You lead me beside peaceful waters;

You revive my spirit,

You guide me in right pathways for your name's sake.

My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

We have been living under the limitations of COVID-19 for a little more than a year now. It seems that we have some ways to go yet but we anticipate that the cloud is lifting. Of course, one of the consequences of COVID-19 is that we have been confined and cooped up. Our year and our circumstance within it have been compared to a “wilderness time.” This is true when “Wilderness” is understood as “desert or wasteland.” Often in Scripture, “wilderness” is meant to evoke a sense of separation and disconnection, the kind of place where one is tested ... alone.

Our COVID journey began last year during Lent, a wilderness time. Doubtless, the obvious connection to the isolating effect of COVID was made in churches all over the world. However, the “wilderness” of Scripture is not exclusively isolating. True, the wilderness is a place disconnected from mainstream society but this in no way implies that it is a disconnection from ***everything or even the most important things***. In the wilderness of Jesus' experience, he receives care from the wild beasts and angels. Interesting that ... wilderness as a place where you are tended,

cared for by the natural and supernatural ... in a total absence of the artificial. In that realm of natural and supernatural, creator and creation, there is no lack ... except the artificial.

God is my shepherd,

There is nothing I shall lack.

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

You lead me beside peaceful waters;

You revive my spirit,

The same publication as was referenced in the Time for Children had another article - Time Spent in Nature Is Good for You - Research has repeatedly suggested that spending time in natural environments improves mental and physical well-being. Now, scientists are gathering the data needed to incorporate this phenomenon in health-care guidelines.

“For decades, scientists and health-care professionals have recognized that exposure to green spaces, such as public parks or forests, is linked with lower risks of all sorts of ailments common in the developed world—including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental distress—and even of mortality. Experimental work has demonstrated myriad physiological responses that occur when people spend time in natural environments: blood pressure drops, heart rate decreases, immune function improves, and the parasympathetic nervous system directs the body to rest and digest.

“As humans increasingly populate urbanized areas, they are spending less and less time in natural environments—perhaps to the detriment of their health. But before doctors can start advising their patients to head to the nearest park, there is an important outstanding question, says White, an environmental psychologist at the University of Exeter Medical School in the UK: How much time in nature do you need to generate these apparent benefits?”

After describing the methodology, the answer was “Two hours.” “It didn’t seem to matter how many trips to a park people took, so long as they got in their two hours per week. It could be a long visit one day, a couple of hour-long trips, three visits of 40 minutes, or four half-hour excursions.”

God is my shepherd,
There is nothing I shall lack.
You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,
You lead me beside peaceful waters;
You revive my spirit,

The Shepherd Psalm is well loved because it is about receiving care. It is common to want to feel cared for. It is common to want a place where your worries melt away. Wherever you are in an artificial setting, somebody has to work hard to make it free from stress and worry. In nature, well, it just is. The Shepherd Psalm reminds us that in the mystery of God’s creation, we are cared for in the wilderness.

God is my shepherd,
There is nothing I shall lack.
You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,
You lead me beside peaceful waters;
You revive my spirit,

When the pandemic is over, people will be deciding where they are going to reappropriate their time. We will do this with everything. Including the church. What we keep and what we throw away.

Part of that will be,
“Did I mind not being so busy?”
“What did I miss?”
“What did I not miss?”
“What was good for me?”

“What was bad for me?”

To be cooped up in any artificial environment is neither God’s nor nature’s way.

This week was Earth Day - Care for Creation, it cares for you.

This is camping Sunday - Church Camps offer Camping as a social and spiritual event.

Hiking, wilderness walking, camping can also be a mindfulness and connecting experience.

When we reemerge from our human-made dens - invest in your health, invest in your soul, invest in the environment and your faith -

God is my shepherd,

There is nothing I shall lack.

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

You lead me beside peaceful waters;

You revive my spirit,

Hymn "Dem Bones"

Ezekiel cried, “Them dry bones”

Ezekiel cried, “Them dry bones”

Ezekiel cried, “Them dry bones;

Now hear the word of the Lord”

The toe bone connected to the heel bone

The heel bone connected to the foot bone

The foot bone connected to the leg bone

The leg bone connected to the knee bone

The knee bone connected to the thigh bone

The thigh bone connected to the back bone

The back bone connected to the neck bone

The neck bone connected to the head bone,

Oh hear the word of the Lord!

Them bones, them bones, gonna walk around,

Them bones, them bones, gonna walk around,

Them bones, them bones, gonna walk around.

Oh hear the word of the Lord!

Invitation to the Offering

As we gather, we recognize that we are truly blessed;

to live in God's wondrous Creation,

to have family and friends and neighbours that we can depend upon.

As God has blessed us

we, in turn, share a portion of that blessing with others,
our time, talent, and tithes,

in support of the work of God's church and our
camping mission.

The offering will now be received.

Offering Prayer

Loving God,

Accept the gifts of our time, talent, and tithes for the work of
your church,

in this community and beyond.

We share what we have so that the warmth and light of your love
will spread to everyone,

and we shout from the mountaintops - Pass it on.

Amen.

Hymn MV 92 "Like A Rock"

Like a rock, like a rock, God is under our feet.

Like the starry night sky God is over our head.

Like the sun on the horizon God is ever before.

Like the river runs to ocean, our home is in God evermore.

Prayers of the People

God of love,

We can learn a lot from the cooperation and fun of camp. In life, as at camp, learning and challenges become stepping stones to our growing maturity. Thank you for surrounding all of us with love, guidance and forgiveness.

We turn away from you sometimes, and doubt you or stop seeking to understand your terms, as opposed to our terms. So today, dear God, our prayers for the people include ourselves and others like us who need reminders about your commitment to us.

Help us to take on a mantle of caring for all life—no matter what our differences are—so that we can make a real difference in the world. There are so many struggling for food or peace, for safety, or for the freedom to worship. We sometimes feel so helpless. Guide us to ways in which we can help those in need; open us to receive your teachings. Help us let our little lights shine by showing love to all.

Help us to accept changes in our understanding of your word that encourage deeper thinking, shifts in perspectives and understanding, which can all lead us to a stronger faith. Bless those who are struggling with physical or mental illness, those grieving losses of any kind, and those who are attempting to find honesty in relationships in social, family or work situations. God, help those who are suffering find strength in your love and feel renewed in their faith.

Humbly, we ask your blessing on these intentions...

Prayers conclude with:

We experience God in a relationship from which we draw strength, courage and encouragement.

The ways of knowing God - as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer; Father, Mother, Friend; may be expressed in the prayer Jesus taught us -

The Lord's Prayer

We Depart to Serve with Joy

Hymn MV 156 "Dance With The Spirit"

Dance with the Spirit early in the mornin',
walk* with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

*alternatives: "move" or "sing"

Benediction

Take the warmth and light represented by this fire into your lives.
Take the warmth and light of God's love into your lives.
May the fun and faith of church camps, reside in your minds and hearts.

And...remember to pass it on.

Choral Amen

Postlude Addams Family Grace

Chorus - Na na na nah (snap fingers twice)

Na na na nah (snap fingers twice)

Na na na nah (sing three times, then snap fingers twice)

We thank the Lord for giving
 The food we need for living
Because we really need it
 And we like it too.

We're thirsty and we're hungry
 Want something in our tummy
The food looks mighty yummy
 And so we thank the Lord.

We thank you for our food, Lord
 For all the things you do Lord
For Mom and Dad and you, Lord
 And for our family.

Chorus

Na na na nah (snap fingers twice)

Na na na nah (snap fingers twice)

Na na na nah (sing three times, then snap fingers twice)