

## **Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 30**

The First Lesson, Second Lesson and Gospel will be read from the Easy To Read Bible. The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer.

**The Collect:** O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **First Lesson: Acts 2:42-47**

42 The believers spent their time listening to the teaching of the apostles. They shared everything with each other. They ate together and prayed together. 43 Many wonders and miraculous signs were happening through the apostles, and everyone felt great respect for God. 44 All the believers stayed together and shared everything. 45 They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those who needed it. 46 The believers shared a common purpose, and every day they spent much of their time together in the Temple area. They also ate together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. 47 The believers praised God and were respected by all the people. More and more people were being saved every day, and the Lord was adding them to their group.

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Psalm: Psalm 23**

1 The Lord is my shepherd; \*

I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures \*

and leads me beside still waters.

3 He revives my soul \*

and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I shall fear no evil; \*

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; \*

you have anointed my head with oil,

and my cup is running over.

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

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

### **Second Lesson: 1 Peter 2:19-25**

19 One of you might have to suffer even when you have done nothing wrong. If you think of God and bear the pain, this pleases God. 20 But if you are punished for doing wrong, there is no reason to praise you for bearing that punishment. But if you suffer for doing good and you are patient, this pleases God. 21 This is what you were chosen to do. Christ gave you an example to follow. He suffered for you. So you should do the same as he did:

22 “He never sinned,

and he never told a lie.”

23 People insulted him, but he did not insult them back. He suffered, but he did not threaten anyone. No, he let God take care of him. God is the one who judges rightly. 24 Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you were healed. 25 You were like sheep that went the wrong way. But now you have come back to the Shepherd and Protector of your lives.

### **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Gospel: John 10:1-10**

10 Jesus said, “It is certainly true that when a man enters the sheep pen, he should use the gate. If he climbs in some other way, he is a robber. He is trying to steal the sheep. 2 But the man who takes care of the sheep enters through the gate. He is the shepherd. 3 The man who guards the gate opens the gate for the shepherd. And the sheep listen to the voice

of the shepherd. He calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. 4 He brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads them. The sheep follow him, because they know his voice. 5 But sheep will never follow someone they don't know. They will run away from him, because they don't know his voice."

6 Jesus told the people this story, but they did not understand what it meant.

7 So Jesus said again, "I assure you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All those who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will be able to come in and go out. They will find everything they need. 10 A thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I came to give life—life that is full and good.

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Prayer: On April 30 we celebrate the life of Sarah Josepha Buell Hale editor and prophetic witness. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Sarah Josepha Buell was born in New Hampshire in 1788 to Captain Gordon Buell and Martha Buell, both of whom were advocates for equal education for both sexes. In 1813, she married David Hale, a promising lawyer who shared her intellectual interests. In 1822, David died four days before the birth of their fifth child.

Sarah Buell Hale wore black for the rest of her life and, to support her family, she turned to her considerable literary skills. In a year, a volume of poetry appeared, followed by a successful novel, *Northwood: A Tale of New England*, which was among the first American novels by women and one of the first dealing with slavery. The success generated by *Northwood* enabled her to edit the popular *Ladies' Magazine*, which she hoped would aid in educating women, as she wrote, "not that they may usurp the situation, or encroach upon the prerogatives of man; but that each individual may lend her aid to the intellectual and moral character of those within her sphere."

In 1830, she published a book of verses for children aimed at the Sunday school market; it included the now-famous "Mary Had a Little Lamb," originally called "Mary's Lamb."

Following the examples of her parents, she labored consistently for women's education and helped found Vassar College. Her publications, including the influential Godey's Lady's Book, promoted concern for women's health, property rights, and opportunities for public recognition. Hale's influence was widespread, particularly for middle class women, in matters of child-rearing, morality, literature, and dress. Although the editor of Godey's instructed her to avoid party politics in the publication, she dedicated much energy to causes which could unite North and South across party lines. She worked diligently to preserve Bunker Hill and George Washington's plantation home, Mount Vernon, as American monuments. She is perhaps most famous for the nationalization of the Thanksgiving holiday, toward which she worked many years and which finally received presidential sanction under Abraham Lincoln.

Her work, in both the women's and national spheres, was exemplary for its conciliatory nature, its concern for the unity of the nation, and for her desire to honor the work and influence of women in society.

**Let us pray:** Gracious God, we bless your Name for the vision and witness of Sarah Hale, whose advocacy for the ministry of women helped to support the deaconess movement. Make us grateful for your many blessings, that we may come closer to Christ in our own families; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**