

***Fourth Sunday of Easter***  
**April 30, 2023**

Welcome and Announcements		
Prelude		Christopher A. McCroskey
Call To Worship	<i>“Surely the Presence of the Lord”</i>	Choir
Greeting		
*Hymn	<i>“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”</i>	381
Opening Prayer		
The Lord’s Prayer		895
<b>Proclamation of the Word</b>		
Prayer of Illumination		
New Testament Reading	Acts 2:42-47	Page 115 (N.T.)
Psalter	Psalm 23	137
*Hymn	<i>“Lead Me, Guide Me”</i>	TFWS 2214
Epistle Reading	1 Peter 2:19-25	Page 223 (N.T.)
Anthem	<i>“Holy, Holy, Holy!”</i>	Rhett Hook
Gospel Reading	John 10:1-10	Page 100 (N.T.)
Sermon	<i>“Through the Dark Valley”</i>	Rev. John Jordan
*Affirmation of Faith	<i>“The Apostles’ Creed”</i>	881
*Gloria Patri	<i>“Glory Be to the Father”</i>	70
Pastoral Prayer		
Presentation of Tithes & Offerings		
Offertory		Christopher A. McCroskey
*Doxology	<i>“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”</i>	95
*Hymn	<i>“He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought”</i>	128
*Dismissal With Benediction		
*Benediction Response	<i>“May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You”</i>	Choir
	May the Lord, Mighty God bless and keep you forever, Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see God’s face and God’s grace forever, May the Lord, Mighty God, bless and keep you forever.	
*Postlude		Christopher A. McCroskey
	*The Congregation May Stand	

***Leading in Worship Today***

Pastor: *John D. Jordan*    AV Director: *Marie Stiles*  
 Choir Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey*    AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*  
 Church Musician: \_\_\_\_\_    Time Together: *Wayne & Charlie Hooker*

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME** in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

***TODAY’S LOVELY FLOWERS*** are given to the ***Glory of God.***

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...

Patsy Zeigler    Becky Derrick    Cristen Hipp    Dale Wells    Patsy Shuler    Christopher McCroskey  
Jimmy Grahl    Latson Lewis    Kaye Floyd    John Ballentine    Dan Greshel    Jack Stevens

**Shut-Ins:** Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

**Family and Friends:** **Al Dekle** (friend of Beverly Shull); **Lauren Edwards** (granddaughter of Hilda Edwards); **Andrea Johnson** (former membes); **Gloria Erd** (friend of Lynn Martin); **Pearl Geddens** (mother of Tom Geddens); **Beverly Lipscomb** (sister-in-law of John Jordan); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **David Williamson, Nancy Wilson, Jimmy Dawkins** (friends of Jeanette Hornsby); **David Turner** (brother of Pam Turner); **Chip Mixon** (friend of Tommy Gleaton); **Ron Walker** (friend of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); **Merit Takach** (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); **Frankie Hendrix** (cousin of Billy Pearson); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Stacy Coggins** (daughter of Steve Aiello); **Dan & Leslie White** (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); **Mary Ann Rentz** (stepmother of Marty Johnson); **Alva Humphries** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **Hayley Beaudoin** (niece of Edwa Meek); **Addie Kinard** (cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek); **Chip Hooker** (Wayne Hooker's father); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Gary Becton** (friend of Mark Branham); **Florence Lee Carter, Monnie Tiller** (friends of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Alexa Lookingbill, Lynn Presley** (wives of coworkers of Kathy White); **Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Wayne Blair** (son of Dot Johnson); **Walt & Janet Beck** (friends of Jo Ann Heiting); **Adam Lavender** (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

**OUR PRESENCE ...**

In-Person Attendance 04/23 SS: 12      Worship: 24

**OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 04/23 \$ 1,181.10

**OUR SERVICE ...**

**OUR WITNESS.”**

**Upcoming Events**

**TODAY LAST DAY TO DONATE ITEMS FOR SPRING SALE**

Columbia Community Concert Band's Spring Concert, 4 p.m.  
(Bus leaves Gunter Circle at 3:20 p.m.)

**05/01** Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

**05/02** Workshop on Centering Prayer, 11 a.m.

**05/03** Workshop on Centering Prayer, 5:45 p.m.

Choir, 6 p.m.

T.a.G., 7 p.m.

**05/04** No Exercise Class

**05/06** Spring Gift Sale, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Readings for May 7**

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

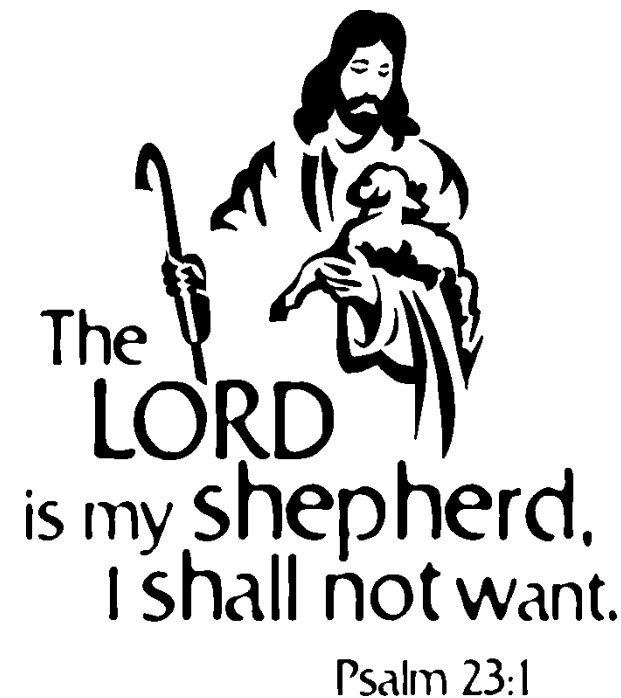
John 14:1-14



<b>Ministers</b>	<b>The Congregation</b>
<b>Pastor</b>	<b>John D. Jordan</b>
<b>Resident Bishop</b>	<b>Jonathan Holston</b>
<b>District Superintendent</b>	<b>Rev. Fran M. Elrod</b>

**Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.**

**Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform**



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**COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND'S SPRING CONCERT**  
**APRIL 30, 2023, 4:00 PM**  
**AIRPORT HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

As we conclude our 42<sup>nd</sup> season, I'd like to thank everyone who has supported us through your attendance at our concerts. It means so very much to our group and to me personally that you take time out of your busy schedule to hear us perform. The music for this concert is listed on the flyer located on the round table in the Gathering Area. A sign-up sheet is located on the Gathering Room table. **The bus will leave the Gunter Circle parking lot at 3:20 p.m.**



Centering Prayer is a form of prayer to increase awareness of God's presence. It involves opening one's heart and mind to God's presence, deepening one's relationship with God, and freeing one from attachments that prevent this relationship. To learn more and practice Centering Prayer, join John Tuesday, May 2, at 11:00 am or Wednesday, May 3, at 5:45 pm.

**EPWORTH MOTHER'S DAY OFFERING**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 14**

**TRANSFORM A CHILD'S FUTURE.** Each year, Epworth Children's Home provides care to children in our own communities who have experienced abuse, neglect, and loss. Epworth's care breaks the destructive cycle and encourages children to aim higher in life. The physical, emotional, academic, and spiritual care they receive transforms their lives. On Sunday, May 14th, 2023, our congregation will support Epworth by collecting the Annual Epworth Mother's Day Offering. We invite you to give generously to the children impacted by Epworth's care and programs. Epworth does not receive apportionments from the United Methodist Conference. This offering is our opportunity to support this vital ministry. For more information, please visit Epworth online at [www.epworthchildrenshome.org](http://www.epworthchildrenshome.org).



**May 6, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Gifts and the remaining inventory from Jewel's Pink House will be at Trinity's Spring Gift Sale on Saturday, May 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Refreshments will be served. All proceeds will benefit God's Helping Hands.

Also included at the sale will be tables of slightly used items such as glassware, jewelry, scarves, flower pots, picture frames and miscellaneous household items.

Donations for the Second Time Around Sale can be left on the stage in the Fellowship Hall. **The deadline for donations is today.** If you have any questions, please contact Kay Jordan (803-315-0673). All sales will be by cash or check.



*You are cordially invited to a*

*Bridal Shower*

*Honoring*

*Kelsey Tolliver*

*May 20<sup>th</sup> 2:00 p.m.*

*Trinity UMC Fellowship Hall*

Please RSVP to Tina by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 by calling or texting (803) 460-6166. They are registered at Amazon or asking for donations for their honeymoon fund.

Psalm 23

This Psalm is the most familiar of all Psalms. Psalm 23 is the first Psalm most of us learned. We can recite it without thinking. We may not think about the meaning of the Psalm because the words roll off so easily.

This Psalm is about God's presence with us, especially during dark times. I have read this Psalm too many times in the past 15 months as it is part of the funeral liturgy. The Psalm begins with the pastoral image of the LORD as our shepherd but the tone changes in the fourth verse. The tone changes from green pastures and still waters to dark valleys, even death.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (KJV)

"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." (NRSV)

Both translations are acceptable and capture the feeling of the valley. The psalmist is not walking through a rolling, green valley but through a deep gorge. The sides are steep, nearly perpendicular. Sunlight penetrates only when the sun is at its highest point. The rest of the time, the valley is in shadows. In these shadows, robbers may lurk, ready to steal, even if they must kill. Yes, the psalmist is walking through a dark, deadly place.

We find ourselves walking in dark valleys, places in our souls where there seems to be only darkness and little light. Many are going through the dark valley of grief, having lost a loved one to death. Some may be going through the dark valley of a terminal illness. Some may be experiencing the darkness of a breakup of a relationship. Some may be experiencing economic darkness after the loss of a job. Some may be experiencing the darkness of mental illness and depression. We may be going through other dark valleys, as these are just a few.

The keyword in the first part is through. Even though we may be walking in a dark valley, the LORD will get us **through** the dark valley. The LORD, our shepherd, does not leave us in the dark valley. The LORD gets us through the dark valleys.

The LORD's rod and staff provide comfort. The rod can mean a symbol of authority, like a scepter. The LORD has authority over all the darkness. Therefore, the psalmist, and we, cannot fear evil because the LORD has power over evil. The Lord has power over all dark forces in our lives.

The staff is a long pole with a crooked end. The shepherd would use the staff to guide the sheep by laying it on the opposite side of the way he wanted the sheep to go. For example, if the shepherd wanted the sheep to go to the left, he would place the staff on the sheep's right side and give a gentle tap. If the sheep did not respond, the taps may get a little harder. The shepherd used the crooked end of the staff to bring back a sheep that wandered from the flock. The shepherd would hook the end around the neck and gently pull the sheep back to the herd.

The Lord's rod provides comfort because it symbolizes the LORD's authority over evil. The LORD's staff guides us through the dark valleys of our lives. As we remain aware of the LORD's tapping and guiding, the LORD leads us through the dark valleys.

But sometimes, it is difficult to discern the LORD's guidance. What we expect the LORD's staff to be may not be the reality. The LORD's staff may be human hands and human minds.

I will never forget a session with one of my clients at the Mental Health Clinic of Jacksonville. Annie suffered from schizophrenia and had been hospitalized at Northeast Florida State Hospital several times. In this particular session, I asked Annie if she attended church. Annie looked me in the eye and said, "John, let me tell you about the church."

"OK, Annie, tell me about the church."

Annie said, "I go to church. The preacher says to come forward, he will lay hands on me, and I will be healed. I go forward, he lays hands on me, and I am healed. I go home and throw away my medicine."

"Then I end up back in the State Hospital."

"I get out of the State Hospital. I hear the preacher on the TV. The preacher says lay your hands on the TV, and you will be healed. I lay my hands on the TV. I am healed, so I throw away my medicine."

"Then I end up back in the State Hospital."

"I get out of the hospital. I listen to the preacher on the radio. The preacher says lay your hands on the radio, and you will be healed. I lay my hands on the radio. I am healed, so I throw away my medicine."

"And I end up back in the State Hospital."

Then Annie says to me, "John, I realized that God gave me the medicine and this clinic to keep me well."

The LORD's staff to guide us through the dark valley is not some miraculous healing like Annie initially thought. The LORD's staff is often doctors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers to get us through our dark valleys. The LORD's staff may be a financial advisor or career counselor. The Lord's staff may be a support group. The Lord's staff may be medicine or some medical treatment. Be aware of the LORD tapping and guiding you through your dark valley.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. If you are walking in a dark valley of depression, intrusive thoughts, or irrational fears, please seek help. Talk to your doctor, contact the local Mental Health Center, the National Alliance for Mental Illness, or the Mental Health Association. If you have suicidal thoughts call 988, a national crisis hotline. God does not want you to stay in your dark valley. The LORD will get you through the Valley. You need to follow the guidance of the LORD's staff to where you need to get through the valley.