

JULY 18, 2021  
EIGHTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*In deepest darkness, God provides safety and comfort.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

|                  |                            |                                      |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday</b>    | <b>Mark 6:30-34, 53-56</b> | <b>Jesus teaches and heals</b>       |
| <b>Monday</b>    | <b>Jeremiah 23:1-6</b>     | <b>God promises a righteous king</b> |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>Ephesians 2:11-22</b>   | <b>United by Christ</b>              |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>Psalms 139:7-18</b>     | <b>The Lord knows us well</b>        |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>Romans 13:11-14</b>     | <b>The day when Christ returns</b>   |
| <b>Friday</b>    | <b>Colossians 1:9-14</b>   | <b>The work of Christ</b>            |
| <b>Saturday</b>  | <b>Psalms 23</b>           | <b>The Lord is my shepherd</b>       |
| <b>Sunday</b>    | <b>John 6:1-21</b>         | <b>Jesus feeds the five thousand</b> |

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*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. Psalm 23:4 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

God of compassion and protection, give us peace and faith in knowing you are our shepherd who pursues us with your goodness through Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Shepherding God, we thank you that you have provided this meal for us and promised us green pastures and still waters through Christ. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May God bless you with peace and comfort all the days of your life.



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JULY 18, 2021  
HYMN OF THE WEEK  
*Have No Fear Little Flock*



### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you felt the need for protection or safety?
- When you feel you are in danger, who do you turn to?
- How do you experience God's care during difficult times?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Psalm 23.

It is good to read this beloved psalm, one that many people have known by heart. This intricately woven poem and prayer has only 58 words in the Hebrew language and very few words are repeated. At the very center are the words "for you are with me" (v. 4b). In the beginning, middle, and end of this psalm, the Lord's presence and care is beautifully announced as part of our journey through life. This is true even—and especially—in our deepest darkness that can sometimes feel like being at the bottom of a valley. God is our shepherd who provides safety and comfort. In an ancient world that accentuated social honor and shame—experiences still very much with us today—our divine shepherd even leads us to a place of honor at a banquet before those who would shame us. Nothing but safety, comfort, and honor pursue God's people. God is our shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We, as ambassadors of Jesus, shepherd one another each and every day to offer safety, comfort, and honor all the days of our lives. When have you felt the presence of the Lord as your shepherd? *Pray:* **Shepherding God, give us peace, safety, and good courage to go out with compassion to shepherd others through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Many people looked to Jesus for teaching, healing and guidance. His ministry was very busy and demanding. Those in helping professions (teachers, doctors, counselors, social workers, pastors, nurses, firefighters, police officers, and others) have many demands placed on them. Their work can be very tiring and sometimes stressful. How can you show your appreciation and support to someone in such a profession?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Jesus took his disciples to a quiet place to rest (Mark 6:31-32). Spend some time in a quiet place for your devotional time this week. Light a candle to represent the presence of Jesus with you. Focus on the candle in your silence. Finish your quiet time by saying the Lord's Prayer.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)