

Sunday  
**April 25, 2021**  
10:00 a.m.

## *Fourth Sunday of Easter*

*Good Shepherd Sunday*

Pastor Greg

Becoming disciples,  
serving God's world.



217 S Main St  
Vicksburg MI 49097  
269-649-2343  
vicksburgumc.org

Pastor Greg Culver  
231-675-4452  
gpculver@mac.com

**Office Hours:**  
Tues., Wed., Thur.  
9:00-1:00



*"Answering the  
Shepherd's Call"*

photo by Gordon Oswalt

### **Gathering**

**Visual Psalter:** "Fear No Evil" — Psalm 23

**Opening Prayer** — from *The Book of Common Prayer*

O God, whose Son Jesus Christ 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.

**Hymn:** #381 "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"

*With even more regrets the congregation is asked to refrain from singing for reasons of health and safety. Thanks for your love and understanding.*

**Scripture:** John 10:11-18

**Sermon:** "Focal Practice"

**Pastor's Prayer after the Sermon**

Shepherd, Lord, your church is in need of focal practice:  
In this world of sports stars and superstars, you alone are God.  
In this world of cyber stalkers and stock markets, you alone are God.  
In this world of presidents and prime ministers, you alone are God.  
In this world of *Amazon* and *Walmart*, you alone are God.  
In this world of armed shooters and armed forces, you alone are God.  
In this world of smart phones and tech upgrades, you alone are God.  
In this world of viral pandemic and viral stupidity, you alone are God.  
In this world of salaries and lay-offs, you alone are God.  
In this world of money, sex, and power, you alone are God.  
You alone are our savior, O Christ.  
We cannot save ourselves.  
In you alone is our life, the hope of glory. Amen.

**Hymn:** W&S #3096 "Gentle Shepherd"

## Congregational Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer

Shepherding God, we gather in one spirit for this time of worship and prayer, because in one way or another the spirit of the resurrected Christ has touched our hearts and made us yearn to know you better.

Thank you for creating us in your image.

Thank you for the precious gift of life on this magnificent planet. Grant us a reverent attitude toward the natural world, creator God, which you have made the source of so much inspiration, healing, and joy. Guide us in the work of healing our environment, that this earthly home may nourish your creation for generations to come.

Lord, these are anxious times. Many of us wrestle with fears that overwhelm us, choices that bewilder us, challenges that feel insurmountable. Be our guide in the wilderness, shepherding God. Lead us with your rod and your staff. Nourish our souls. Guide our steps.

We lift up to you all who struggle with illness, pain, addiction, and mental health challenges. Relieve their physical and emotional distress. Provide people they can turn to for care, for love, for guidance.

We lift up people living in war-torn lands, refugees and migrants seeking safety. We pray for leaders striving to govern wisely. We remember healthcare workers. We pray for families who mourn the loss of loved ones.

Something in our current system is not working, God. Racial strife is anti-Christ. We know that this is a difficult time to be a police officer. So be present with, guide, and protect our fellow citizens who are entrusted with responsibilities, those who have answered this call to serve their communities. Empower them to do so according to the highest values of their calling: honor, integrity, service, accountability, and courage.

God, we grieve all the mass shootings. We pray for victimized communities, for comfort, for healing. We ask for your presence with the families who grieve untimely, violent deaths. We pray for a way forward, a way out of this seemingly endless cycle of violence. Guide us, Lord Jesus. Show us

the way out of this recurring cycle of tragedy. Bring forth a time when all our communities, all ethnicities, will know justice, safety, respect, dignity, and peace.

Good Shepherd, you know what it is to suffer an unjust death yourself. We ask you to remind us that your answer to despair is resurrection and new creation. Give us hope that with you, and through you, all things are possible.

We lift up these prayers and more...

...in your name, praying as you taught us, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

**Offertory** ~ Barb Hosner and Karla Stubblefield

**Dedication of Gifts and Self** — based on 1 John 3:16-24

*Thank you so very much for your love, prayers, and financial support!*

Glorious God, we know that your capacity to love is infinitely greater than our own ability. Indeed, you call us to love one another in truth and in action. We yearn to be active disciples, so that our hearts truly abide with you. Use these gifts to increase our ability to be your followers. In the name of the One who laid down his life for us, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

**Hymn:** #128 "He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought"

**Visual Benediction:** "Fill the Land"

*A Prayer of Hope by Kelly Ann Hall...*

Face-up my beloved,  
even at your most vulnerable;  
when corruption demands your head —  
rest assured: I Am for you!

I will throw open the gates,  
even wider the doors of the sanctuary,  
to expose where religion plots against a  
brother,  
withholds and starves a sister,  
hangs its members on words  
spoken against empire;

against building much of nothing.  
 And still,  
 I will not turn my back against the mistaken,  
 even though you have not understood much  
 of me,  
 I remain who I Am:  
 Teacher  
 Shepherd  
 Liberator!  
 To the willing ear, I speak truth coupled with  
 love.  
 The wounded-in-action, I bandage with justice  
 armed with divine perspective.  
 To the slipped, sunken, and fallen, I restore  
 and even more so,  
 I love shamelessly!  
 Righting wrongs, washing hands, purifying  
 hearts!  
 I am planting seeds of goodness among you,  
 a new reality is sprouting, in it is more than  
 enough!

My Glory will fill the land.  
 It  
 will  
 fill  
 the  
 land.  
 I'll light the path and will guide you myself —  
 don't give up — follow me  
 and your heart will know eternal peace,  
 Yes, your heart will flow with my eternal  
 peace.  
 In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy  
 Spirit — One God, now and for ever and to  
 the ages of ages. Amen.

### Postlude

The offertory prayer is copyrighted © 2021 by  
 David S. Bell, United Methodist Foundation  
 of Michigan.

### Prayer for Family and Friends

#### Updates and New Requests This Week

Sue Epley fell this past week and is recovering  
 from multiple fractures.

#### Previous Requests

Pray for every family undergoing difficulties.  
 Pray for persecuted Christians around the world.

### In Service to Our Country

Walker Polsinelli	Geoff White
Tyler Smith	

### For Cheer and Hello

David Bretz	Mina Willett
Flossie Lang	Betty Witcher
Robert & Carmen Parsons	

### This Week's Celebrations

<u><b>Birthdays</b></u>	5/1 Paul Schutter
4/25 Bill Oswalt	
4/26 Glory Bragg	<u><b>Anniversaries</b></u>
4/27 Bonnie Oswalt	4/26 Jeff & Polly
4/30 Mel Zimmerman	Preston
5/1 Rae Ann Graves	4/28 Daniel & Tamara
5/1 Marie Ketvirtis	Janer

### VUMC's Mission Statement



### The General Rule of Discipleship

To witness to Jesus Christ  
 in the world, and to follow  
 his teachings through acts  
 of compassion, justice,  
 worship and devotion  
 under the guidance of the  
 Holy Spirit.

### This Week's Calendar

#### Today

10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

#### Monday, April 26

6:00 p.m. Finance Committee online

7:30 p.m. Church Council online

#### Tuesday, April 27

*no church activities are scheduled*

#### Wednesday, April 28

8:00 p.m. Midweek prayer meeting online

#### Thursday, April 29

*no church activities are scheduled*

#### Friday, April 30 — Pastor's Day Off

*no church activities are scheduled*

#### Saturday, May 1

*no church activities are scheduled*

#### Next Week

#### Tuesday, May 4

7:00 p.m. Trustees in the Taylor Room

## VUMC scholarships

Scholarship applications will be available in the church office Tuesday, April 27, through Thursday, May 6. You may also request one to be emailed to you by contacting Polly at [reception@vicksburgumc.org](mailto:reception@vicksburgumc.org). Completed applications are due back in the church office, either paper copy or email, by Sunday, May 9.

## Church Council meeting

Church Council will meet tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. online. Everyone is welcome to join the meeting with Google Meet or by phone. Join with Google Meet at [meet.google.com/zwy-dzto-yfm](https://meet.google.com/zwy-dzto-yfm) or join by phone at +1 707-397-5473 (PIN: 689708202).

## Pastor Greg's office hours

Pastor Greg will likely be in his office —

Monday: 9:00 to noon

Wednesday: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Thursday: 9:00 to noon

Please call ahead to confirm.

## Midweek prayer meeting

To join the online prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings from 8:00 to 8:30, please click this link: [meet.google.com/hii-yaux-ggs](https://meet.google.com/hii-yaux-ggs).

Otherwise, to join by telephone, dial: +1 415-604-0783; enter PIN: 815 342 983#.

## Coming deadlines

- Items for the May newsletter are due to Polly ([reception@vicksburgumc.org](mailto:reception@vicksburgumc.org)) by tomorrow.
- ShopWithScrip orders are due in the church office by 2:00 Monday, May 3.

## Watch any Sunday service anytime

on YouTube. Search for Vicksburg UMC and select it from the list, then select the service you want to watch.

## Donate through consignment

United Methodist Women has an account at Home Again Consignment Store at 815 W. Prairie, Vicksburg. Anyone can drop off good new or used items at the store, and the proceeds will be donated to UMW. You must make an appointment at 649-1944, Facebook page and <https://www.homeagainvicksburg.com/>. Facebook and website have the rules for consigning.

## Twelve Baskets offers free food

If you are in need of food, you can shop twice a month at Twelve Baskets on the following dates each month:

- 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:30 to 5:30
- 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 10:00 to 1:00

Currently, drive-through shopping is necessary, and food will be delivered to your vehicle.

Twelve Baskets is located at 10332 Portage Rd., Portage, just north of E. Osterhout Ave.

If you are in need of food and are not able to get out to shop, please contact Kris Miller at (269) 760-3036 or [millerberg@comcast.net](mailto:millerberg@comcast.net). Kris can accommodate one home delivery per week.