



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
4th Sunday of Easter

Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
April 26, 2026



*We have the closed hearing loop system.
You may be able to turn your hearing device to the "T" setting.*

*To allow all worshippers to reflect and prepare for the service,
please observe silence during the prelude.*

4th Sunday of Easter

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" Raymond Haan

CALL TO WORSHIP *(Please respond with words in bold)*

We gather in this place to worship God, the Shepherd of our souls.

We worship our God who has created us and who sustains us,
Who redeems us and who walks beside us,
And who calls us to follow in faith and trust.

This is our God, gentle yet powerful, lowly yet mighty,
shepherd yet King.

Let's worship our God together!

HYMN #381 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

OPENING PRAYER

Shepherd of our souls, you desire to guide all creation into safety, refreshment and peace. Meet us here today and fill us with your love, that we may look at the world with your loving care, welcome our sisters and brothers with your joy, and offer our lives with your generosity. Grant us a wider vision of the world and a broader view of justice. Give us dreams of peace that are not defined by boundaries of geography, race, religion or the limitations of worldly structures and systems. Open our eyes and our ears that wherever we go, we may hear your voice calling us by name to serve, to share, to praise, so that we may never give up on the promise of your kingdom, where the world is transformed, and all can enjoy life in all its fullness. In the name of the living Christ we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-31 *God, the true shepherd*

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. ¹² As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep, so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

²⁰ Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you pushed with flank and shoulder and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, ²² I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged, and I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³ I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I the Lord have spoken.

²⁵ I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild animals from the land, so that they may live in the wild and sleep in the woods securely. ²⁶ I will make them and the region around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. ²⁷ The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil, and they shall know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them. ²⁸ They shall no more be plunder for the nations, nor shall the animals of the land devour them; they shall live in safety, and no one shall make them afraid. ²⁹ I will provide for them a splendid vegetation so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land and no longer suffer the insults of the nations. ³⁰ They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. ³¹ You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord.

Psalms 100 UMH 821 *A song of thanksgiving*
(Please respond with the words in bold.)

1 Peter 2:19-25 *Stay close to the shepherd in times of trial*

For it is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. ²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³ When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

John 10:1-10 *Christ, the shepherd who guards the sheep*
(Please stand as you are able.)

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

Gentle Shepherd, you guide us in right paths, you lead us in the ways of righteousness; we seek to follow and yet find that we go astray. We have allowed our anger, our greed, our apathy, and at times even hate, to direct our paths. We have overreacted, we have taken more than our share, we have coveted what others seem to have, distracted from the blessings in our own lives. Forgive us, God, for not following your ways. Forgive us for not remembering that we are your sheep, and you are our Shepherd. Forgive us when we have not listened for your voice and instead have acted in the ways of the world. Guide us back to your path of loving you and loving our neighbors. Help us to unclench our fists and open our hands in hope and healing, compassion and grace. In the name of Christ our Shepherd we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep by name, and lays down his own life for them, saving them and restoring their life.

We are the sheep of God's pasture. In Christ, we are called by name, forgiven, and restored. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH #885 A Modern Affirmation

(Please stand as you are able)

GLORIA PATRI #70

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

HYMN #138 The King of Love My Shepherd Is

OFFERTORY *Sinfonia* to Cantata No. 156 J. S. Bach
Arr. for Organ by E. Power Biggs

OFFERING <https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

DOXOLOGY #95

(Please stand as you are able)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Faithful Shepherd, who calls us by name, you invite us into a life that is rich in meaning, deep in joy, and bold in compassion. You speak, and we long to follow—although the world is noisy and the path unclear. In this moment of offering, we quiet our hearts to listen again. Receive these gifts as signs of our trust in you. May they be used to bring abundance to all people, feeding the hungry, strengthening the weak, seeking the lost, and proclaiming your voice of love. In our coming and going, in our worship and service, make us more like Christ, in whose name we give and pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN #310 He Lives

(Please stand as you are able)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Improvisation

(Please be seated)

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Bob Kintner: 828-329-2457

Lay Leaders: Paula Markert: 828-553-9434, Maria Buehler: 828-553-2128

Audio/Visual & Livestream: Joe Haraschak: 813-918-1916

Ushers: Fred Markert

Liturgist: Jo Ditzel

Coffee Hour: _____ * Still come for fellowship. There are cookies!

*Some liturgical selections are adapted from umcdiscipleship.org and *Re:worship*.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Flower and Coffee Hosts are sought for the coming weeks.

Please see the charts in the Fellowship Hallway to sign up. Your gifts shared in this way are a significant contribution to our worship and fellowship. Thank you to all who volunteer! **And thank you to the Holimons and the Markerts** whose orchids have continued to add beauty and blessing to our altar as we worship today.

Sunday Morning Bible Study meets at 8:45 am in the Minnich Conference room on Sundays, prior to worship. All are welcome! This is a 'come as you can' Bible Study and a study guide is provided. Don Henderson, bacpac@comporium.net, facilitates this group. Please reach out to him if you have questions.

Website Revamp

"A picture is worth a thousand words!" Work is underway revamping our current website and we would love to include more pictures! If you have any photos of the church, fellowship hall, the church grounds or events that have occurred there in the past two years, please send the JPG photo link with an explanation if necessary (who is in the photo, what the event was, etc.) to Cynthia Wood at cmwood50@gmail.com with an explanation if necessary. We appreciate your submissions.

The Prayer Ministry meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 9:30 AM. Prayer requests may be mailed to LTUMCPrayerRequests@gmail.com.

AA Meets Every Thursday Night at 4:45 PM in the Dice Hall. To honor anonymity, please do not go to the Parish building from 4:00-6:00 PM.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Marti Hughes, Sally Steinmeyer, Grady Price,
Leslie Brown, Katie Monkus-daughter of Stan & Bobbie Moore,
Maud Lipscomb-mother of Elizabeth Dice

We extend our deepest Christian sympathy to the family of Marty Butz. Cards may be sent to his wife, Tacia and children, Andrew & Luke at P.O. Box 178, Lake Toxaway, NC 28747.

Cards may be sent to his parents, Charles & Linda Butz, at 152 Camptown Rd., Brevard, NC 28712.