

April 26, 2026

Good Shepherd Sunday



The Strongest Type of Witness

LIVING HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

welcome to
WORSHIP

We're so glad you decided to worship with us today. You could have chosen to be anywhere this morning, and you chose to spend your time with Living Hope. Thank you! It's an honor to have you here and to have the chance to fill you with hope. Welcome to Living Hope.

CURRENT SERIES INFO

Current Series: You Are My Witness

This series for the Easter season focuses on the Acts of the Apostles and their witness to the resurrection of Jesus. The witnessing of Christ didn't stop with those initial eyewitnesses. You and I today are called, too, to be witnesses of Christ by sharing that testimony and the joy and peace of salvation built on it.

Today's Focus: The Strongest Type of Witness

What does a powerful Christian witness really look like? Is it bold preaching, persuasive arguments, or even heroic sacrifice? In Acts 6 and 7, we meet Stephen, a man who wasn't an apostle, pastor, or public figure, but an ordinary servant in the church. Yet through his life, and even more through his death, we see something extraordinary. As the early church grows and faces pressure from within and without, Stephen quietly serves, boldly speaks truth, and ultimately gives his life. But what stands out most isn't just his courage—it's his love. Even as stones are raised against him, Stephen's final words echo grace, not vengeance.



LIVING HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ABOUT LIVING HOPE

Living Hope Lutheran Church is a brand new mission church on Chattanooga's east side. We are funded by and a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a collection of over 1,300 churches across the United States and Canada.

Living Hope succeeds in its mission when hope forever in Jesus brings hope for every day in life.

For more on our mission, background, and beliefs just visit our website: livinghopechatt.com


ABOUT WORSHIP

Worship at Living Hope is designed to fill you with hope! The message you hear at Living Hope will center you on your Savior, Jesus, and what he's done for you. Worship isn't just about filling up God with praise. Worship is all about *God filling you* with good news!

We follow a basic order of service, called the liturgy. In the message, in specially selected Scripture readings, and in carefully crafted songs, prayers, and creeds, the liturgy proclaims the good news (gospel) about Jesus from start to finish. Gospel-centered worship is also designed to include participation of those in attendance.

- Feel free to get up to use restrooms **at any time** during the service.
- **Restrooms** are located around the corner to your right.
- A **nursery** is available for small children out the left-hand side of the worship space. Just look for the **Kid's Zone sign** just past the info corner by the main entrance. Feel free to use that space during worship. The service will be livestreamed into the room.
- **Kid activity bags** are available on a table by the entrance to the sanctuary.
- Please fill out a **connection card**. It's our best way to stay in touch with you and thank you for joining us today! You'll find connection cards on the table at the entrance.
- Everything you need to enjoy today's worship will be found in this Worship Folder. **Songs** will also be found on the screen.

Show friends where you are—check in!

 /livinghopechatt

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Come Away from Rush and Hurry

CW 913

To the tune of Brothers, Sisters, Let Us Gladly

- 1 Come away from rush and hurry
 to the stillness of God's peace;
from our vain ambition's worry,
 come to Christ to find release.
Come away from noise and clamor,
 life's demands and frenzied pace;
come to join the people gathered
 here to seek and find God's grace.

- 2 In the pastures of God's goodness
 we lie down to rest our soul.
From the waters of God's mercy
 we drink deeply, are made whole.
At the table of God's presence
 all the saints are richly fed.
With the oil of God's anointing
 into service we are led.

- 3 Come, then, children, with your burdens—
 life's confusions, fears, and pain.
Leave them at the cross of Jesus;
 take instead his kingdom's reign.
Bring your thirsts, for he will quench them—
 he alone will satisfy.
All our longings find attainment
 when to self we gladly die.

Text: Marva J. Dawn, b. 1948

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The name of the Triune God and sign of the cross remind worshippers of their baptisms.

Call to Worship

Minister: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Come, let us worship our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

In every worship service we confess our sins then cling to the forgiveness that Jesus gives us. Confession is called the "heartbeat of the Christian."

Confession & Absolution

As we come to our Good Shepherd in worship today we confess our wandering ways before him as sheep who so often stray.

Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a troubled and repentant sinner, confess that I have sinned against you in my thoughts, my words, and my actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should.

I am distressed by the sins that trouble me and am deeply sorry for them.

Jesus' death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world.

He said to his people, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven."

Because of the promise of our Savior Jesus, I forgive you all your sins.

Be assured that you are a dear child of God and an heir of eternal life!

Amen.

I Am Jesus' Little Lamb

CW 804




1 I am Je - sus' lit - tle lamb; ev - er glad at
2 Day by day, at home, a - way, Je - sus is my
3 Who so hap - py as I am, e - ven now the



heart I am, for my Shep - herd gent - ly guides me,
staff and stay. When I hun - ger, Je - sus feeds me,
Shep - herd's lamb? And when my short life is end - ed,



knows my need and well pro - vides me, loves me ev - 'ry
in - to pleas - ant pas - tures leads me; when I thirst, he
by his an - gel host at - tend - ed, he shall fold me



day the same, e - ven calls me by my name.
 bids me go where the qui - et wa - ters flow.
 to his breast, there with - in his arms to rest.

Text: Henrietta L. von Hayn, 1724–1782; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.
 Tune: Choral-Buch . . . Brüder-Gemeinen, Leipzig, 1784
 Text and tune: Public domain

Prayer of the Day

O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Good Shepherd who laid down your life for the sheep. Lead us now to the still waters of your life-giving Word that we may abide in your Father’s house forevermore; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

GOD'S WORD

Epistle Reading

Hebrews 13:20–21

²⁰Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,
²¹equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Please Stand

The Gospel centers our worship as it shares with us the good news about Christ. We stand out of respect for our Savior as we hear about his words and deeds

Gospel

John 10:1–10

¹“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

The gospel of the Lord

Praise be to Christ!

Please be seated

Children's Message

Children are invited to come forward into the front for the children’s message. They will be given a special message designed just for them that ties in with the sermon.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

CW 552



1 The King of love my shep - herd is, whose
2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my
3 Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but
4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill with



good - ness fails me nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
Sav - ior gent - ly leads me, and where the ver - dant
yet in love he sought me and on his shoul - der
you, dear Lord, be - side me, your rod and staff my



I am his, and he is mine for - ev - er.
pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feeds me.
gent - ly laid and home, re - joic - ing, brought me.
com - fort still, your cross be - fore to guide me.

5 You spread a table in my sight,
a banquet here bestowing;
your oil of welcome, my delight;
my cup is overflowing!

6 And so through all the length of days
your goodness fails me never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing your praise
within your house forever!

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821–1877, alt.

Tune: Irish, 18th cent.

Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon Reading

Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60

¹In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen.

²To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me!

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵²Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

⁵⁴When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to

heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.
⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”
⁶⁰Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”
When he had said this, he fell asleep.

The Strongest Type of Witness

Questions to consider while hearing the sermon:

1. Why did Joseph keep going back?
2. What does Stephen pray with his final breath?
3. What is Stephen’s background? What was his job in the Church?
4. It’s hard to do what Stephen did. It’s hard to preach the _____.
5. What question being asked could unsettle us?
6. What is the strongest type of witness?
7. What does the Good Shepherd do to guard his messengers?
8. What happens at the end of Joseph’s story?

Discussion questions on next page

Discussion questions:

(for Theology on Tap)

1. In Acts 6:1–7, what problem arises in the early church, and how is it addressed? What can we apply for today from the way the early church handled this?
2. Glance through Stephen’s sermon in Acts 7. What does his message reveal about the pattern of God’s people rejecting his messengers?
3. Agree or Disagree: These days it is harder to preach the Law than it is to preach the Gospel.
4. Share how Stephen’s vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God in heaven is a comfort to you, like it was for him.
5. Share a reason why you think the account of Stephen is a good tie-in for Good Shepherd Sunday.

Please stand

By All Your Saints Still Striving

CW 892 sts. 1, 7, 3



- 1 By all your saints still striv - ing, for all your saints at rest,
- 2 All praise, O Lord, for Ste - phen, who, mar - tyred, saw you stand
- 3 Then let us praise the Fa - ther and wor - ship God the Son



your ho - ly name, O Je - sus, for - ev - er - more be blessed.
to help in time of tor - ment, to plead at God’s right hand.
and sing to God the Spir - it, e - ter - nal Three in One,



You rose, our King vic - to - rious, that they might wear the crown
Like you, our suf - f’ring Sav - ior, his en - e - mies he blessed;
till all the ran - somed num - ber who stand be - fore the throne



and ev - er shine in splen - dor re - flect - ed from your throne.
with “Lord, re - ceive my spir - it,” his faith, in death, con - fessed.
as - cribe all pow’r and glo - ry and praise to God a - lone.

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt.
Tune: Finnish
Text and tune: Public domain

Christians have used the Nicene Creed since the fourth century to unite themselves together and to obey God’s invitation to “confess with our mouth and believe with our hearts” (Romans 10:9).

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offering

We collect offerings out of thanks for what God has done for us so that we can support gospel work here and around the world. You can give using the envelope provided in your worship folder. You'll also find instructions there for how to give online if you'd prefer. Thank you for supporting our gospel ministry! If you are a guest with us don't feel obligated to contribute. This service is our free gift to you!

Praying the prayer of the church is a time when we can pray for people in all kinds of circumstances and for the work of God's church on earth.

Prayer of the Church

Loving Shepherd of the sheep, fill us with contentment and confidence during this season as we celebrate your Easter victory. You laid down your life for the sheep and then rose again to assure us that you give us eternal life.

Good Shepherd, save us.

Strengthen our faith to follow where you lead, to the green pastures of your Word, the quiet waters of our baptism, and the gracious table of your body and blood where our cup overflows with your forgiving love. Guide us to find in you the gate that leads to safety and good pastures.

Good Shepherd, lead us.

Guard and protect us from those who want to lead us astray and snatch us out of your hand. Give us courage to fight against the devil and wisdom to recognize false teachers. Lead us to honor and follow those you have called to shepherd your flock, the Church.

Good Shepherd, guide us.

Let your rod and your staff comfort us and all your sheep in times of sickness and sadness and especially when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. May we find in your redemption and your Father's resolve the unbreakable promise that we will dwell in your house forever.

Good Shepherd, console us.

Move us to reach out to sheep who are not yet a part of our sheep pen but whom you have claimed as your own. Give us your passion to search for the sheep who are lost and lead us to rejoice when they have been found.

Good Shepherd, inspire us.

We thank you for all the blessings we have gained from your goodness: family and friends, wealth and health, work and leisure. Give us wisdom to long for and cherish your more precious gifts, your Word and sacraments, so that your goodness and love may follow us all the days of our life.

Good Shepherd, hear us. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

To our worship guests seeking an altar at which to commune: Since the Lord's Supper is an expression of outward unity in the faith as well as an inner union with Christ, we ask that those who are not communicant members of our fellowship please schedule a meeting with the pastor before coming to the Lord's Table. We ask this in loving obedience to the Scriptures and not in judgment of anyone's faith, sincerity or standing before God. See the announcement about our communion practice at the back of this worship folder for more info as well.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who by his willing sacrifice on the cross took away the sins of the world and by his glorious resurrection restored everlasting life. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Lamb of God

Agnus Dei

Tune: AURELIA



2 O Lamb of God ex - alt - ed, you take all sin a - way;



ex - tend to us your mer - cy and hear us as we pray.



With God the Ho - ly Spir - it, at God the Fa - ther's throne,



you reign, O Christ, for - ev - er, for you are Lord a - lone!

Text: Michael D. Schultz

Tune: Samuel S. Wesley

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Tune: Public domain

Words of Institution

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

As you wait to go up to the table take some moments to examine your heart.

Acknowledge sin. Trust God's forgiveness through Christ. Recognize the real presence of Jesus' body and blood together with the bread and wine. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

Distribution

Personal Prayer: Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

The historical "blessing of Aaron" (Numbers 6:24-26) has been spoken over God's people for over 3,500 years.

Blessing

M: Brothers and sisters go in peace.

Live in harmony with one another; serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Acknowledgments

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There Is One Gospel

By City Alight



There is one Gos - pel on which I stand for
is one Gos - pel to which I cling, all
is one Gos - pel where hope is found, the



all e - ter - ni - ty. It is my sto - ry, my
else I count as loss. For there, where jus - tice and
emp - ty tomb still speaks. For death could not keep my



Fa - ther's plan, the Son has res - cued me.
mer - cy meet, He saved me on the cross.
Sav - iour down, He lives and I am free.



Oh, what a Gos - pel, oh what a peace. My high - est joy and my
No more I boast in what I can bring, no more I car - ry the
Now on my Sav - iour I fix my eyes, my life is His and His



deep - est need. Now and for - ev - er, He is my light. I
weight of sin. For He has brought me from death to life. I
hope is mine. For He has pro - mised I too, will rise. I



stand in the Gos - pel of Je - sus Christ.
stand in the Gos - pel of Je - sus Christ.
stand in the Gos - pel of



And in this Gos-pel, the church is one, we
do not walk a - lone. We have His Spi - rit as we press on to
lead us safe - ly home. And when in glo - ry still I will sing
of this old sto - ry that res - cued me. Praise to my Sav - iour, the
King of life. I stand in the Gos - pel of Je - sus Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to today's musicians and vocalists!

Mark Hennings; piano



Sunday School and Bible Study— After worship @ 11:30am

Sunday School for children will take place after worship today. Children will meet with their appropriate age groups and are taught by a team of teachers with full background checks. The adults will have Sunday Study today in the lobby, starting a new study series on “The Chosen” TV show. To prep for next week’s discussion please watch season 3 episode 2.

Living Hope Small Groups

- Women’s Group — Mondays every other week at 6:45pm (next meeting Mon May 4)
- Men’s Group—Mondays every other week at 7am. (next meeting Mon. Apr 27)
- Hands of Hope—every other Thursday at 10am. (next meeting on Thurs May 7)
- Life on Mission—next session at church on Wednesday Apr 29 at 7pm
- Theology on Tap—weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7pm

See more details for these groups at <https://livinghopechatt.com/small-groups>

Foundations Bible Study

If you're interested in membership here at Living Hope, Foundations is our "next step" class, but even if you're not interested in membership, you'll find it to be a good overview of what God has to say to you in his Word. If you're interested in attending the course just check the box on your connection envelope that says "I'd like to attend a membership class" in order to jump into a new group class or individual class. In-person or online classes are available!

New in-person classes are available on Saturdays at 10:30am at church.

Online classes are available on Thursdays at 7:30pm. Message pastor for a class link.

Communion at Living Hope

Communion is important to us at Living Hope and we seek to honor the biblical view of *close communion*. Before coming up for communion, all adults should ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you confess your sins and seek to turn away from the sins you confessed?
2. Do you recognize that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only way sin is forgiven?
3. Do you recognize that in the Sacrament you receive Jesus' true body and true blood along with the bread and the wine? (*1 Corinthians 11:27-29 + 1 Corinthians 10:15-17*)
4. Do you believe that the Bible *IS* God's inspired Word and does not just contain some truths of God?
5. Do you believe that Living Hope Lutheran Church teaches only the truth of God based on His inspired Word? (A summary of these teachings is taught in the *Foundations* course.)

Connection Envelopes

We'd love to get your valuable feedback on our worship service today. If this is your first time at Living Hope we also want the opportunity to give you a gift to say "thanks for being our guest!" You can place your connection envelopes in the offering plate as it passes or in the basket located at the entrance of the sanctuary. Also feel free to just hand it to pastor.

Service Teams — This week

Sunday Setup Team—Snyder
Snack Provider—Schmidt, Turner
Ushers—Frizzell, Gorman
Acolyte—Eliza Dyer

Service Teams — Next week May 3

Sunday Setup Team—Frizzell, Turman
Snack Provider—Bassett, Dyer
Ushers—Open
Acolyte—Bohdi Turner

Pastor Eric Melso

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