



In Step with the Good Shepherd

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads 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. —Psalm 23:1-4

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who enjoy the journey and those who delight in the destination. The Christian life shifts between the two. We savor each day of daily life, as we anticipate the blessed hope of heaven. But the soul of our rejoicing is God Himself, the One who's with us along the way and waiting for us when we arrive. Eternal life is ours now, because God is with us.

Repentance, of course, is essential, because people—like sheep—stray off the path and away from the Shepherd. Even though lines on a map look geometrically straight, travel isn't a matter of geometry but of consistency. We don't stay on the path by unwavering perfection but by ongoing correction.

That's where repentance comes in. Like walking or driving, living is an ongoing process of turning back on track. As a shepherd, David—the “sweet psalmist of Israel”—knew this fact, and he points us to the LORD as the One who keeps us on track. Security and joy in the Christian life come from the guidance of the Good Shepherd.

There are times of refreshment that we need so badly, and they come at just the right moment. We enjoy those times, because God provides them. We find *green pastures* of abundance because our Shepherd leads us to them. The *still waters* that quench our thirst appear before us because He brings us to them.

And God leads us by keeping us on the path. Repentance—the constant course corrections that keep us from straying too far—is responding to the LORD's direction, as He *restores* our souls and turns us back onto the *paths of righteousness*. The secret to fellowship with God is letting Him take the lead and accepting His corrections—sometimes abrupt and painful, other times subtle and gentle, but always faithful and for our good. Blessings await when we allow God to do the turning.

But the journey is often fraught with death and danger. We're on a journey home, but we haven't arrived yet. Our Shepherd has a *staff* to correct us, but He also has a *rod* to protect us—sometimes from others and sometimes from ourselves. Life here on earth is a valley of dark shadow, and God is a good enough Shepherd to keep us from settling down here and making this world our home.

Straying is easy. Staying the course is hard. As we nose our way along life's journey, we sniff things that seem appetizing, and head off in the wrong direction. We follow what appeals to us without examining where it leads and stray into trouble. Sometimes our pride tells us we don't need a shepherd and we're fine on our own. There are lots of ways to stray, and they all make sense at the start. Generally sin is something we want to do.

Life is dangerous, because our world is fallen, and so are we. Death threatens, because the ruler of this world is our enemy, not our friend, despite all appearances to the contrary. Our hope is in heaven and our good is the God who guides and provides for us on the way. The Good we aim for is also the Guide who keeps us on the path. He keeps us from straying from His side, so we stay on the way to life.

Always for our good and always to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for the Week

Ask God to send a conviction of sin and repentance to His Church during the weeks before Good Friday and Easter. Pray that we will see our sin for what it is and confess it, so we will find safety and favor in His grace alone.

Monday (Home and Sunday (Church)): Pray for Terilyn Brown (Children’s Ministry Director). Seek God’s power for ministry and protection from all harm for Terilyn and her family.

Family): Pray for your family and close friends who do not know Christ. Ask God to save them from their sins and lead them in His will.

Tuesday (Job/School): Ask Christ to reveal Himself through you to those work with. Ask God’s help you love Him with all your heart, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community): Pray for the safety, integrity, and effectiveness of the local police, sheriff and fire departments.

Thursday (Our Nation): Pray for repentance and revival at Northpoint and in the American Church. Implore God to send His Holy Spirit to renew our love for Christ and zeal to serve Him.

Friday (The World): Pray for spiritual transformation and physical provision for those suffering from disease and privation throughout the world.

Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing): List ten things that you enjoy. Tell the Giver how much you appreciate Him, as well as the gifts He gives.

Prayer for Our Leaders

Pray that God’s hand will be on our leaders, to give them His strength and protection.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who will soon come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, Karen Sherwood, and Dani Tiqui.

Prayer Record

Record specific prayers you have below. Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ... For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ... And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There. –Revelation 21:3; Hebrews 13:14; Ezekiel 48:35b