

## One Flock, One Shepherd

John 10:14-16

“How often does your congregation celebrate the Lord’s Supper?” That’s a question that comes up every now and then when us preacher-types get together. A growing number celebrate this sacrament every week – not just Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, but some Presbyterians too. Most Protestant denominations observe this sacrament monthly, usually on the first Sunday of the month. And then there are congregations like ours which celebrate the Sacrament once a quarter, usually on the first Sunday, which is today.

That means that today is one of four days in the year when the vast majority of Christians all over the country, and indeed all over the world, come together around a common table. It is thus a day for us to celebrate not only our communion, our connection to Christ, but also the fact that we are one with one another.

And isn’t that what Jesus told us in today’s passage as well? He first spoke these words to one specific ethnic group, the Jews, who up to that time had been the sole bearers of God’s truth, the sole recipients of God’s grace. But Jesus said that He had other sheep who were not of that fold, other people who were scattered across space and time, people from every tribe and tongue and nation. Jesus said that some of those people, whom the Jews called Gentiles, the goyim, would also become part of His flock.

And how would people from all those other nations become part of Christ’s flock? Jesus said that we would hear His voice. Jesus said that He would know us and that we would know Him. In other words, it is our relationship with Christ that joins us together, making us the people of God. It is as we listen and believe His Words, as we trust Him to tell us the truth that we are drawn into this relationship.

And what is it that He tells us? What is this truth which we need to believe? In verse 15, Jesus said, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” That’s the amazing truth that was demonstrated on the cross, the same truth Jesus teaches us at this table. For no matter what we may want to believe about ourselves, no matter how good we think we might be as we compare ourselves with others, the fact is that we are all sinners, all rebels against God’s righteous rule, all deserving of the death penalty for high treason against our Lord and King.

But the good news is that Jesus Himself laid down His life for His sheep, for all who hear His voice and trust in Him. The good news is that Jesus paid the death penalty that all of us owe, dying so that we might live, giving up His life so that we might be one with Him, just as He is One with the Father.

But Jesus made the supreme sacrifice for another reason as well – so that we might all be the sheep of one fold, so that we might all be one with one another.

So, on this World Communion Sunday, let’s celebrate the amazing fact that we are all joined to Christ by faith. Let’s celebrate a joint service of two congregations – one at which members of lots of other congregations are present as well. Let’s celebrate our participation in the Engage 2025 project, which is preaching the gospel to Syrian refugees, people who speak a different language and who live halfway around the world. And let’s celebrate that all of us have One Good Shepherd Who has given His life for us.