

Clinton First United Methodist Church
Order of Worship for April 26, 2026
Fourth Sunday of Easter (White)
Sermon: "Which Voice Are We Following?"
Pastor Ashlée Vitz

Scriptures - [Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-34](#) . [Psalm 100](#) . [1 Peter 2:19-25](#) , [John 10:1-10](#)

Praise Team

["For the First Time Again"](#)

["The Lighthouse"](#)

["How Great is Our God"](#)

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

God calls us first; we respond together as participants, not spectators.

Pastor: Easter people, we gather to worship and to listen, to learn the sound, the feel, the cadence of the Shepherd's voice.

People: **We come seeking our Shepherd's voice.**

Pastor: We gather to worship and to discern, to learn how to recognize our Shepherd's voice amidst the chaos and noise of our lives.

People: **We come seeking our Shepherd's voice.**

Pastor: We gather to worship and to find shelter, to learn to trust our Shepherd's voice to guide us to safety and provide for us in all things.

People: **We come seeking our Shepherd's voice.**

Pastor: Come, let us worship as we listen for the voice of Jesus who guides us, protects us, provides for us, and draws us together in community
People: **We come to worship as the family of Christ, a flock seeking and following our Shepherd's voice. Amen.**

Response Song / Opening Hymn

Worship is active, so we respond to God's call with praise and unity.

["Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"](#)

UMH #381

Opening Prayer

We center everything in God, naming our desire to be present with Him. Loving Shepherd, you know our names; you care for us. When we face darkness and death, journey beside us. When we hunger for your love, fill us with your presence. When we are fearful, feed us at your table. May we dwell in the house of goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. Amen.

Reading of the Psalms

The Psalms are the prayers of God's people spoken across generations. So before we bring our own joys and concerns, we join our voices with theirs, connecting us with those who love the Lord across time!

[Psalm 100](#) - All Lands Summoned to Praise God A Psalm of Thanksgiving

Response to the Psalm

We respond to a Psalm of praise with musical joy!

["I'm Gonna Sing"](#)

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

We bring real life into worship, trusting God with our joys and our burdens.

Pastoral Prayer

We collectively lift our spoken and unspoken prayers, trusting God hears and responds.

Passing of the Peace

We share Christ's peace, remembering we do not walk this journey alone.

["Joy"](#)

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

This is the second out of three parts of our service, called proclamation and response. This is when we listen for God's Word, and respond with our lives.

Old Testament Reading

This is when we remember the story of God's people and our shared spiritual history.

[Ezekiel 34:11-16](#) - God, the True Shepherd

Response Song

Hearing Scripture invites a response of praise, and we do this in song!

New Testament Reading

This is when we connect the early Church's witness to our lives today.

[1 Peter 2:19-25](#) - Follow the shepherd, even in suffering

Response Song

We affirm that God's Word shapes how we live, so we respond to our New Testament reading in song!

["Where He Leads Me"](#)

UMH #338

Gospel Reading

We have come to our Gospel reading! Gospel actually means good news! So we stand for the Gospel reading to honor the Good News of Jesus Christ, who is present and speaking to us through these words. The reading of the Gospel is when we center on the life and teachings of Jesus: The very heart and soul of our faith!

[John 10:1-10](#) - Christ the shepherd

Response to the Gospel

This is when we honor Christ and acknowledge the Good News we have received. So once again, we respond in song, this time to the reading of the gospel message!

["My Hope Is Built"](#)

UMH #368

Prayer of Confession

This is when we respond honestly to God, bringing our whole selves before Him. You are invited to pray out loud or in your heart. Let us pray.

God of wisdom, we confess the foolishness of our ways, and our failure to follow you in your paths of right relationships – with you and with others. We have gone astray; we feel lost. We have upheld our own interests first, to the detriment of others. We have failed to be generous with the poor and abandoned our efforts to bring about justice. We feel the stains of our sins, God; have mercy on us according to your steadfast love. Wash the sinfulness out of us and help us to live more faithfully as your servants. We

seek your unfailing Lordship and ask for your guiding hand on our lives. You are the immortal, invisible One; to you be honor and glory forever; Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

This is when we receive the Good News that we are forgiven and made new!

Pastor: Merciful and loving God, We thank you for never losing hope for us. When we are lost, you are there on the lookout for us, bringing us back to you like the good shepherd that you are. Your Word tells us of the joy in heaven that awaits us. May this joy flow into our lives each day, and be faithfully reflected into the world around us. Thanks be to God, our Great Shepherd.

People: Amen.

Children's Sermon "Which Voice Do You Follow?"

This is when we remember that faith is for all ages and nurture our youngest disciples.

["Jesus Loves the Little Children"](#)

Teen Time

This is when we create space for youth to explore, question, and deepen their faith.

Disclaimer: This video is going to say that "The Bible is literally God's voice in written form." That is wildly oversimplified, so please take that statement with a grain of salt! The rest of the video is excellent though!

["What's the Best Way for Teens to Hear God's Voice?"](#)

Sermon "Which Voice Are We Following?" Pastor Ashlee Vitz

This is when Scripture, community, and real life meet, inviting transformation no matter where each of us is on our faith journey!

Response to the Word

We respond to what we've heard, not leaving unchanged.

Please stand as you are able.

["Here I Am, Lord"](#)

UMH #593

SENDING FORTH

This is the third of our three parts of worship.

This is when we prepare to carry worship into the world as people sent by God.

[“Reckless Love”](#)

Offering

We give in gratitude, responding to God’s grace in our lives.

Offering time can be a challenging moment for some people, and that’s understandable.

But here is some scriptural comfort:

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” [2 Corinthians 9:7](#)

Peace be with you. God only asks for what your heart is moved to give. No pressure. No guilt. No shame. No blame. God is love.

[Doxology](#)

UMH #95

(A Doxology is just a short expression of praise to God.)
We praise God as the source of every blessing!

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow”

[James 1:17](#)— “Every generous act... is from above”

“Praise Him, all creatures here below”

[Psalm 150](#)— “Let everything that breathes praise the Lord”

“Praise Him above, ye heavenly host”

[Luke 2:13](#)— heavenly hosts praising God

“Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”

[Matthew 28:19](#) — [Trinitarian language](#)

Closing Hymn

We sing as people being sent, united in purpose and mission.

[“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love”](#)

TFWS #2223

Benediction

We receive a blessing and are sent to live out our faith.

Beloved community, may God bless you with open hearts and minds so that together we may pay attention, discern, and follow our Shepherd’s voice, for that is the way that leads to abundant life on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Postlude

[“You Will Be Found from Dear Evan Hansen”](#)