

## A Weekly Banquet in Eastertide

### *A Banquet*

Each week, St. Peter's serves a banquet; of words; God's words. The Gospel Book is carried in procession, lifted high for all to see. Later, a portion is broken off and fed/read to us. Before that, portions of the Old Testament and the New Testament Letters are read. In between, we respond with a Psalm or two. All this is food, not only for thought, but also for the soul. Good news that God still loves us. . .and has things for us to do. A light on our path and assurance of help from the Holy Spirit. We come in famished and go out filled, nourished, and energized for another week.

### *Let's Eat!*

The readings for the fourth Sunday in Eastertide are here:

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=89>. They are: Acts 4:5-12 • Psalm 23 • 1 John 3:16-24 • John 10:11-18.

Psalm 23 is perhaps the most familiar of all the Psalms. It is filled with images or metaphors, so familiar to us that we recite them without thinking deeply. Let's unpack them. Where did they come from? All about sheep. When was the time when you encountered a sheep or flock? Not in suburban Glenside. How about dogs? They are everywhere, including in church every October.

So. Let's try this: "The LORD is my dog owner." You smile, but dogs are as familiar to us as sheep were to the first hearers or users of this Psalm. We meet their every need, lead them in paths of safety, even along suburban streams (Pennypack or Wissahickon). If we use this version, all these familiar things about dogs enrich the image of God's care of us.

Now, turn to the Gospel of John. How does Jesus use the metaphor of shepherd? What does he say it involves for him? Make a list of the ways. What new meaning now attaches to the image? And in John's letter, what are the implications for our behavior?

What is your best new insight from these readings?

—Larry Sibley