



# DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of February 27, 2022 (John 10:1-18)

## A Prayer for Ukraine:

God of peace and justice,  
We for the people of  
Ukraine today. We pray for  
peace and the laying down  
of weapons. We pray for all  
those who fear for  
tomorrow, that your Spirit  
of comfort would draw



near to them. We pray for  
those with power over war  
and peace, for wisdom,  
discernment, and  
compassion to guide their  
decisions.

Above all, we pray for all  
your precious children, at  
risk and in fear, that you  
would hold and protect  
them. We pray in the name  
of Jesus, the Prince of  
Peace. Amen.

(Archbishops Justin Welby and  
Stephen Cottrell)

## Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

### The Story: John 10:1-18

**Context:** This week we come to one of the most important passages in the Gospel of John. It's no mistake that it lands in the middle of the book. It functions like a hinge turning us from what Jesus is here to be and do to the full realizing of what he is here to be and do.

One trick about this passage is that the chapter heading comes in an unfortunate place. One would think that the beginning of a chapter marks a new story. But in John 10:1, Jesus is in the middle of his discourse on the sign of healing the blind man toward the end of chapter 9. One only needs to back up a few verses from 10:1 to see this. So to get the whole of what Jesus is saying, it can be helpful to back up.

That said, there is a shift in his words here. It is here that we get to his claim as the "Good Shepherd". This is such a powerful image in Christendom that many churches have named themselves (in some form) "Church of the Good Shepherd".

The image of Shepherd is a huge one, going all the way back to the Hebrew Bible, and in particular to Moses who was tending sheep when God spoke to him through the burning bush. One of the misnomers about shepherds in Christendom is the way in which they are gentle. They often are gentle, and notions such as leading with a shepherd's crook versus a whip or a sword are real and good, but shepherds were also tough and

## Acts of Compassion & Justice:

### MN Food Share Month:

Welp, March is upon us, and that means Minnesota Foodshare Month! MN Foodshare month is a statewide effort every March to support local food shelves and other organizations that help with food insecurity. We, of course, will be holding a food drive for STEP. So bring in those non-perishable food items!



**Ukraine Support:** At the producing of this Devotions for Life, we do not yet know of the needs in Ukraine nor the mechanisms to meet those needs. But we do anticipate the needs to be great and we plan to respond accordingly. So stay tuned for ways we can support Ukraine.

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**Ash Wednesday is March 2nd at 7:00pm!** Join us for a special Ash Wednesday service where will center our evening in lifting up Aldersgate Church in prayer. These are important days in the life of our community, so we thought this would be a great time to be together and entrust our future to the care of the Spirit. Join us in-person or online!

fierce, often having to wrestle their sheep to protect them, and had to fight off anything that may threaten them. As we explore the image of "Good Shepherd" keep that toughness, tenacity, and fierceness in mind along with the gentleness.

**Reading the Story:** As you read, read carefully. Notice the images Jesus uses, how they work together, and how they may contradict. Also look for what may be any foreshadowing for events to come, for as we move through Lent, we will see much of what Jesus mentions here come to fruition.

### Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What images or metaphors popped out at you in this passage? What don't you quite understand?
- This famous passage is actually a continuation of Jesus' words at the end of chapter 9 where he is talking directly to the Pharisees: How does the fact that this passage is directed to the Pharisees change its meaning or how we hear it?
- These words come off of healing a blind man who then obeyed Jesus' words. How might this inform the words "the sheep hear my voice"?
- Who are the "characters" in this passage? Who do you think they represent?
- Why do you think Jesus says that he is both "the gate" (verse 9) and "the good shepherd" (verse 11)?
- What do you think Jesus' overall point is in this passage?
- Who are the "other sheep?" (Note of interest: The Mormon Church believes themselves to be these "other sheep").
- What is significant about verse 18?
- What in this passage could be foreshadowing future events in Jesus' life?

