

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**  
**Cycle A RCL**  
**Revised**

**Acts 2:42-47**

The author idealized the communal system of the Jerusalem church and offered it to the readers as an example of the good order and harmony that existed in the early days of the faith. If Acts describes this system at all correctly, it may explain the collection Paul had to make for the church in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8-9), which may have fallen into dire economic straits because of their financial practices. So far as we know, this communal system appeared only in the Jerusalem church and resembled in some ways the communal life described in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

**Psalm 23**

*Psalms of trust* like Psalms 11, 16, 23, and 27, read like embellishments of the portion of lament psalms that express the author's trust in God's eventual vindication of the psalmist (e. g. in the lament Psalm 7:10-13). The exact use in the temple liturgy of these trust psalms is unknown, but they may be pilgrimage songs of some kind. The unusual compound word *tsalmavet* ("death shadow" 23:4) in the Bible (18 occurrences) is either a figure of extreme danger or a reference to the abode of the dead, *Sheol*.

**1 Peter 2:19-25**

This is part of an exhortation to Christian slaves. (See 2:18.) Slaves seldom gained admission to the voluntary religious societies of the Roman world, and so we might find it unusual to have the author address them here. Far from being an endorsement of slavery, the present passage urges those who face involuntary servitude to see in their undeserved sufferings a reflection of the undeserved sufferings of Christ. Some interpreters have taken vss. 21-25 as an early hymn of the church, while others have seen in them a commentary on the "Suffering Servant" poem in Isaiah 53.

**John 10:1-10**

This passage reflects the "bad shepherd-good shepherd" oracle in Ezekiel 34. The kings of Israel have led Israel into peril and disaster while God, the true shepherd, has gathered the scattered flock of Israel and has led them safely. The shepherd becomes yet another metaphor John uses to explain what it meant for the eternal "word" (*logos*) of God to become flesh (John 1:14).