Fourth Sunday of Easter
Cycle B RCL

Acts 4:5-12
Quirinius installed Annas as high priest in 6 CE. Caiaphas was Annas' son-in-law and assumed the high priesthood in 18 CE only to be deposed in 36 CE by the procurator Vitellius, the successor of Pilate. Here, as in Luke 3:2, the author of Luke-Acts shows himself innocent of some of the fine details of Jewish history and practice. Peter gives this speech to explain the power by which he had healed the lame man in the temple precincts the day before (Acts 3:1-10) and to answer the charge of false teaching for his instruction on Solomon's portico thereafter (3:11-26). Peter's speech is a brief synopsis of Christian faith centered on Psalm 118:2, brief because the healing of the lame man was itself the most convincing sign of the power of Jesus.

Psalm 23
Trust psalms, like the *laments*, are either individual in expression (Psalms 11, 16, 23, 62, 131) or communal (Psalms 125, 129). On the other hand, the psalms of trust do not ask for deliverance but, like the hymns, celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness. Their liturgical function is unclear.

1 John 3:16-24
In 1 John love is not only *a* commandment but *the* one and only commandment. In this passage, the author has stepped outside the Gospel of John to retrieve a tradition also found in the Gospel of Matthew 5:21-22 to the effect that those who hate (the opposite of love) are as guilty as murderers and certainly cannot belong to the followers of Christ.

John 10:11-18
The figure of the shepherd was a frequent metaphor for the Near Eastern king. Jesus' messiahship is, like that of the good king, one of service and protection for the sheep. In 1 Samuel 17:31-37, David, who was to be the first messianic king, convinced Saul to let him battle Goliath, reminding Saul that as a shepherd he sometimes had to fight for his sheep against "both lions and bears" (1 Samuel 17:36). Like King David, Jesus expresses his willingness to lay down his life for the sheep over which he watches.