

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

April 30th, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Good Shepherd Sunday



“Jesus As Our Good Shepherd”

art by Julie Lonneman, USA

created for the Liturgy Training Publication's 2011 Year of Grace giant poster/calendar.

<http://julielonneman.blogspot.com/2011/01/happy-new-year.html>

The Good Shepherd Seeks and Finds the Lost with Love, 2016, Global Christian Worship.

<https://globalworship.tumblr.com/>



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a just world for all

April 30th, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Good Shepherd Sunday

“We think of Christ as our Good Shepherd, the one who is with us always and is calling us to listen to his voice. We are reminded that there is no other shepherd who would suffer for us and knows when we are suffering. Christ calls us into the fold, and we are not alone.”

- Mindi Welton-Mitchell

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

**please stand as you are able,*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude - *Betty Funk*

*Call to Worship

One: In the laughter of children,
we hear the voice of the Gate of the Way,
and find our way home.

**Many: In the lap of a parent,
God's compassion cradles us
in the still waters of love.**

One: The Shepherd of our lives
leads us through that door
into life with him forever.

**Many: We are baptized with living waters
which refresh us, restoring us
to follow Jesus all our days.**

One: The Holy Spirit, Keeper of truth,
is the Light which guides us
through every shadowed moment.

**Many: The Breath of life stills our worries
and fears, as we are lead to that
peaceful place of God's heart.**

***Prayer of the Day**

**Buoyed by your living waters,
we are at peace in seas
of stress and success;**

**detoured onto those walkways
leading to your joy,
we find our way out of mazes
of meetings and deadlines;**

**nourished at your picnic
in that garden of grace,
our shredded souls
are anointed by your healing;**

**you slow us down just enough,
as we try to escape
the very lives we think we want,
so goodness and mercy
can catch up with us
and carry us into your heart.**

**God in Community, Holy in One,
may you always be with us on our journey,
as we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

***Hymn – NCH 238 - Now the Green Blade Rises**

Now the Green Blade Rises

Text: John M. C. Crum, 1928; alt.

Tune: NOËL NOUVELET 11.10.10.11.

Harmonizer: Martin F. Shaw

Text & Music: © 1928 Oxford University Press

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**1 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth for many years has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that rises green.**

**2 In the grave they laid their Love whom hate had slain,
Thinking that their Love would never wake again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that rises green.**

**3 Christ came forth at Easter, like the risen grain,
Jesus, who for three days in the grave had lain,
Quick from the dead the risen One is seen:**

Love is come again, like wheat that rises green.

4 When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Christ's warm touch can call us back to life again,
Fields of our hearts, that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that rises green.

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: Act 2:42-47

The Revised Common Lectionary continues with lessons from the early church in Acts. Following the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we learn that awe came upon everyone in Acts 2:42-47. The new believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, and became a new community that shared their resources with each other, broke bread together, worshiped and fellowshiped together. Their faithfulness was observed by others as they were "winning the approval of all the people," and new believers came to join them every day because of how the Spirit was lived out in their life together as a community of faith.

2 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' instructions and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 A reverent fear overtook them all, for many wonders and signs were being performed by the apostles. 44 Those who believed lived together, shared all things in common; 45 they would sell their property and goods, sharing the proceeds with one another as each had need. 46 They met in the Temple and they broke bread together in their homes every day. With joyful and sincere hearts they took their meals in common, 47 praising God and winning the approval of all the people. Day by day, God added to their number those who were being saved.

Psalm Response: Psalm 23 (Unison)

The Shepherd's Psalm of Psalm 23 has long been attributed to David, but this ancient song of assurance and comfort while facing evil and death continues to speak to us today of God's faithfulness and steadfast love. God is the one who provides for us and cares for us as a good shepherd, and will be with us through life's greatest challenges and loneliness. Even in the face of evil, God's blessings overflow, and we know God is present with us, now and always.

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;**

3 he restores my soul.

**He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.**

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

**5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.**

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long**

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:19-25

The Epistle readings for the season of Easter are from 1 Peter. In this week's selection of 2:19-25 (coming after next week's selection of 2:2-10), the writer of 1 Peter identifies Christ's suffering with that of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. The writer assures the believers in the early church who were struggling that their suffering was in solidarity with Christ, who also suffered unjustly. The writer states that Jesus suffered on the cross for sin, so that sin would not have a hold on humanity. In Christ, believers have healing and hope, even while they suffer. Christ is our shepherd, the one who guards us and has delivered us from the sin of the world.

2 19 For grace is given if you endure unjust punishment for your conscience in the name of God.

20 What credit is there if you patiently endure harsh punishment as a result of your sin? But if you put up with suffering for doing what is right, this is acceptable in God's eyes. 21 It was for this that you were called, since Christ suffered for you in just this way and left you an example. You must follow in the footsteps of Christ, 22 who did no wrong, who spoke no deceit, 23 who did not return insults when insulted, who, when made to suffer, did not counter with threats. Instead, Christ trusted the One who judges justly. 24 It was Christ's own body that brought our sins to the cross, so that all of us, dead to sin, could live in accord with God's will. By Christ's wounds you are healed. 25 At one time you were straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

Gospel Reading: John 10:1-10

The Gospel readings turn to John for the remainder of the season. In John 10:1-10, Jesus speaks of the shepherd as the one who guards the sheep and is the gate, for the sheep know the shepherd's voice and know how to enter through the gate. Anyone who does not enter by the gate are thieves and marauders, those who want to cause harm to the sheep. Jesus as the gate wants to save the sheep, while others want to steal and kill (in the first century, there were others claiming to be the Messiah before Jesus). Jesus shared this metaphor but those listening did not understand that he wanted to lead the people to eternal life, not to a temporary safety, but an eternal assurance of God's faithfulness.

10 1 "The truth of the matter is,
whoever doesn't enter the sheepfold
through the gate
but climbs in some other way
is a thief and a robber.

2 The one who enters through the gate
is the shepherd of the sheep,
3 the one for whom the keeper opens the gate.
The sheep know the shepherd's voice;
the shepherd calls them by name
and leads them out.
4 Having led them all out of the fold,
the shepherd walks in front of them
and they follow
because they recognize the shepherd's voice.
5 They simply won't follow strangers—
they'll flee from them
because they don't recognize the voice of strangers."

6 Even though Jesus used this metaphor with them, they didn't grasp what he was trying to tell them. 7 He therefore said to them again:

"The truth of the matter is,
I am the sheep gate.
8 All who came before me
were thieves and marauders
whom the sheep didn't heed.
9 I am the gate.
Whoever enters through me will be safe—
you'll go in and out and find pasture.
10 The thief comes only to steal
and slaughter and destroy.
I came that you might have life
and have it to the full.

Choral Response – His Name is Wonderful

Music by Audrey Mieir, 1959
Choir: Keith Konet, Bob Bucklew and Barbara Rossington
Accompanist: Betty Funk

Reflection – “Jesus, the Gate – Unlocked - Wide Open – Inviting – Free” -

by the Rev. Scott Rosenstein

WE RESPOND

***Prayer of Response**

**Good Shepherd,
Teach us to follow you
to care for all that are close to us,
to protect those who are threatened,
to welcome those who are rejected,**

to forgive those who are burdened by guilt,
to heal those who are broken and sick,
to share with those who have little or nothing,
to take the time to really know one another
and love as you have loved us.

Good Shepherd,
Teach us to follow you
to spread compassion to those who are far away,
to speak for those who are voiceless,
to defend those who are oppressed and abused,
to work for justice for those who are exploited,
to make peace for those who suffer violence,
to take the time to recognize our connectedness,
and to love as you have loved us.

Good Shepherd,
Teach us to follow you
and to be faithful to the calling you gave us
to be shepherds in your name.

Amen.

***Hymn – NCH 252 – Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us**

Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us

Author (attributed to): Dorothy A. Thrupp, 1779-1847

Hymns for the Young, 1836, alt.

Tune: BRADBURY 8.7.8.7.D.

Composer: William B. Bradbury, 1859

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**1 Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
much we need your tender care;
in your pleasant pastures feed us,
for our use your folds prepare.**

**Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have bought us, yours we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have bought us, yours we are.**

**2 We are yours, in love befriend us,
be the guardian of our way;
keep your flock, from sin defend us,
seek us when we go astray.**

**Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
hear your children when we pray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
hear your children when we pray.**

**3 Let us always seek your favor;
let us always do your will;
Jesus Christ, our only Savior,
with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have loved us, love us still.**

***Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings**

We bring our story of faith and we walk with the world, giving and receiving again and again. Like Jesus' first followers, we are called to spend time together sharing what we have with glad and generous hearts. You are invited to join your gifts with the gifts of others as we receive the offering.

The Offertory - *Betty Funk*

***Presentation of Offerings - Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Blessing of the Gifts**

**Divine Light,
with grateful hearts
we ask you to bless the offerings
we bring to this church community.
Our gifts flow from gratitude
for your presence in our lives.
In our times of green pastures and still water,
in our times of grief and exhaustion,
you are our shepherd,
and with you we shall not want.
Amen.**

Choral Hymn— The Lord My Shepherd Is

**Author: Isaac Watts, 1717
Tune: POTSDAM S.M.
Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach, 1747
"Church Psalter," 1854
Choir: Keith Konet, Bob Bucklew and Barbara Rossington
Accompanist and Choir Director: Betty Funk**

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer – using “debts” and “debtors”

**Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

GOING FORTH

***Parting Hymn - O Jesus, You Were Born to Be vv. 1, 2, 3, & 6**
(To the tune of NCH 117 - "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates")

O Jesus, You Were Born to Be

Text: Copyright © 2008 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

Tune: TRURO L.M.

Composer: Charles Burney, ca. 1788

Thomas Williams' Psalmodia Evangelica, 1789

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**1 O Jesus, you were born to be
God's gift to save humanity;
And one great day we're moving toward,
All life will bow and call you Lord!**

**2 You taught the people every day
As Rabbi, Teacher of the Way;
O Master, may we learn from you
To love both God and neighbor, too.**

**3 You are the Bread that satisfies,
The Light that guides us through our lives,
The Gate that leads us safely home,
The Shepherd calling to your own.**

**6 O Jesus, you're the living Way,
The Resurrection, God's new Day.
You give us hope and make us new;
How wondrous is our life in you!**

***Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Day by day, God will lead us:

Many: to those pools of peace where we can
gather with our friends and strangers.

One: Day by day, Jesus will call us:

**Many: to give ourselves in service,
to anoint others with hope.**

One: Day by day, the Spirit shows us:

**Many: the people we might be,
the community we might become.
Amen.**

***Postlude - Betty Funk**

* * * * *

Credits

- (1) The Call to Worship, Prayer for the Day, and the Commissioning and Benediction are adapted from *Liturgy w/communion for April 30, 2023 (Easter 4 - A)*, written by the Rev. Thom M. Shuman, and posted April 24, 2023 on his blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (2) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Prayer for Good Shepherd Sunday*, written by John van de Laar, and posted 2009 on his Sacredise.com website. Reposted May, 2011 on the blog, *re:Worship*. <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>
- (3) The Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings and the Blessing of the Gifts are adapted from *April 30: Fourth Sunday of Easter Invitation and Prayer* posted on *Offering Invitations and Prayers January-June 2023 (Year A)* posted on the website of *The United Church of Canada*. https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2022-12/offering-invitations-prayers_jan-jun-2023.docx.
- (4) Permission to stream music in this service obtained from One LICENSE, license#A-736636. All publishing rights reserved

Ministers, *All of Us*
Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor*
Betty Funk, *Pianist and Music Director*
Keith Konet, *Council President*
Beverly Wurm, *Administrative Assistant*



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

Tithes and Offerings - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ
c/o Keith Konet
1039 Bridlewood Drive
Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly began a part-time position with us. She is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W.14th) /home. The days and hours are:

Monday – 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: zionchurchtremont@gmail.com or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).

Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.

- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community,
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- The people of Turkey and Syria: more than 50,000 people have died following two devastating earthquakes. Hopes of finding people alive have dimmed and experts fear the toll could rise sharply. Turkish authorities say some 13.5 million people have been affected in an area spanning roughly 280 miles from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east, and 186 miles from Malatya in the north to Hatay in the south. At least 44,374 deaths have been reported in Turkey, while 5,800 951 people have died in Syria. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- The people of California profoundly impacted by the atmospheric rivers, flooding rains and winter storms and snow. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- Prayers for healing process for the surviving children, faculty, parents, and extended families of the Covenant School, a Christian school for pre-K through 6th grade students in Nashville, Tennessee. A mass shooting there left three students and three adults dead.
- Prayers for the healing process for the survivors and staff of Old National Bank of Louisville, Kentucky and their extended families. A mass shooting there left 5 dead and several injured including a responding police officer with critical injuries.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 172 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of April 23rd, 2023. In 2022 a total of 648 mass shootings. In 2021 a total of 693 mass shooting incident occurred across the US, in 2020 a total of 611, in 2019 a total of 417, with 337 incidents in 2018. While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit – and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States - We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.
- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the omicron variant and various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests,

or treatments

- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
 - Patti Augustine and family
 - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is at Mapleridge Senior Living Willoughby, OH.
 - Betty Funk (*our Minister of Music*) receiving care in a medical rehab unit.
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob; friend of Elaine – health concerns*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara Reed, Nancy Moore's sister has passed away.
 - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet - *prayers for recovery.*
 - Keith Konet and family
 - Marcia Leslie (*neighbor and friend – health concerns*)
 - The family and loved ones of Elaine Lukacs.
 - Linda and James Mortach (*Elaine Lukacs' sister & brother-in-law*) & Linda's daughter and James' son
 - Patricia Matheny (*prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*) Prayers for her family at the loss of her brother Keith Matheny who grew up in the Zion Church. Also the loss of a dear friend Craig Lucas.
 - Barbara Rossington (*move to a new senior housing community*) - *Prayers for Barb's cousin Robert for upcoming tests and procedures.*
 - Henry Senyak (*resident community leader – cancer*)
 - Debbie Webb (*Debbie has fallen a couple of times – in one fall she suffered a broken femur – and in a second recent fall, she broke a bone in her arm. She is recovering*)
 - Beverly Wurm and family



The Border Church / La Iglesia Fronteriza

A binational church, we share communion on Sundays across the US/MX border. Una iglesia binacional, compartimos el sacramento los domingos en la linea.

<https://www.facebook.com/BorderChurch/>

Imperial Beach, CA. – US - Mexico Border

article: "A congregation that spans the US-Mexico border:

[https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/congregation-](https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/congregation-spans-us-mexico-border)

[spans-us-mexico-border](https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/congregation-spans-us-mexico-border) (by Amy Frykholm in the April 22, 2020 issue of *The Christian Century*)

Friendship Park is the historic border meeting place at the western edge of the US-Mexico border, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Friends and families from both nations have been meeting at this place for generations. Every Sunday afternoon since November 2011, people from both nations have gathered to share communion across the border wall, a reminder that neither God nor God's people will be limited by national boundaries. **Donate to Support The Border Church/La Iglesia Fronteriza Re-Boot through GiveButter with Credit or Debit Card, Venmo, or PayPal - <https://givebutter.com/BorderChurchReboot>**



Cultural Sensitivity My Story

From Nayiri Karjian, General Minister, Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, UCC | March 16, 2023

One of the joys of living is discovering that the world is a vast mosaic of cultures and ethnicities, of languages and religions, of nationalities and sexualities, and more. This is especially true in our society, which is made up of generations of indigenous people whose cultures were annihilated, of generations of slaves who were owned by those in power, of indentured servants who were bound to work for another, of a variety of generations of immigrants, who continue to come by their own choice, and others by fleeing danger and harm.

This reality exposes the necessity of cultural sensitivity, a definition for which is – respect and awareness for people’s strengths and gifts, their culture and knowledge, and their unique worldview. Cultural sensitivity implies that one would withhold judgment of these cultural differences and their practices, that one would continue to be open, grow in self-awareness, and learn to deal effectively with these differences. *(variety of google resources)*

I write about this because we, as an Association of 146 congregations, urban, suburban and rural, congregations of European and African descent; an Association of 340 authorized ministers comprised those of European, African and Asian descent, those who identify as BIPOC - black, Indigenous and people of color, those who identify as LGBTQ+ and non-binary, those with different abilities, and more, have covenanted to do the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ together in this world, at this time, and to live together as the Living Water Association.

As all covenants, this covenant demands our openness, our care and love, our commitment to be safe when we gather, to respect and be aware of the mosaic of which we are part.

Most of you know that I grew up in Syria, lived in Beirut, Lebanon, and when the civil war in Beirut intensified, came to the US to attend Lancaster Theological Seminary in PA. Aleppo is the city of my birth. Yet, I am of Armenian descent, which assumes a Christian faith. Armenians are one of the first Christians and are mostly Orthodox/Apostolic. My family, however, is Protestant/Evangelical, following evangelism work by the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of the joint global ministry of the Congregationalists and Presbyterians in New England. To this day, Protestantism is a minority in the Eastern part of the world, where a variety of ethnic Christians are Orthodox. Because Syria was an Arab and Muslim country, we Armenian Christians who found ourselves in exile following the genocide perpetrated by the Ottomans, created communities of our own, including churches and schools.

I grew up speaking Armenian at home, Arabic in school and outside the home, English which was taught as a foreign language by second grade, adjusted to Turkish which my grandparents spoke at home, and some French because Syria was colonized by the French for a long time. Each language holds a culture. During childhood and teenage years, my friends had diverse ethnicities, faiths, cultures and languages. It was just a way of life. We navigated it.

In Beirut, I attended the Haigazian University, an Armenian Protestant University, where classes are offered in English since the student body is diverse. Armenian courses are offered for those who are Armenian. In order to begin my studies, I had to pass TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language. It was during those tests that I was introduced to multiple choice questions. I had not seen them before. My educational culture did not include them.

1

Cultural Sensitivity 2

From Nayiri Karjian, General Minister, Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, UCC | April 27, 2023

This article is somewhat of a follow up to my article dated March 16 in which I shared my own story of growing up in exile with a variety of cultures, religions, languages with sensitivity toward each.

Yet, growing with diversity and non-uniformity, does not guarantee cultural sensitivity. Cultural sensitivity requires respect, openness to differences, acceptance of alternative context and perspectives, the ability to grasp “difference” not as better or worse but simply as “unlike,” and above all, the willingness to let go the conviction that there is one right, superior way.

I believe that for too long, the dominant, White Western American Protestant Christian culture, has thought and taught that it is the best, the highest, the rightest culture on earth. This has implied that other cultures are less and lacking. In order to grasp and grow in cultural sensitivity, one has to let go the conviction that ours is the best and the rightest.

The first time I had to write a ministerial profile, I was introduced to “self-appraisal.” I was baffled. How can I praise myself? Once I understood what was expected, I struggled with answering it. In older Middle Eastern and Armenian cultures, one does not sing their own praises. In fact, it is considered rude and arrogant to do so. One did not promote themselves nor boasted about their accomplishments. Accomplishments spoke for themselves. And, humility was valued.

In western culture, generally, humility is often confused with low self-esteem. Yet, the two are quite different. Humility is knowing your place in the universe, especially in relation to God and to others. You are no better and no less than anyone else. Self-esteem is knowing your own value and worth and having confidence in yourself. Although my self-esteem is healthy and my confidence unshakable because of the Holy Spirit who lives in me, 40 years later, I still struggle with sharing about my accomplishments as it feels arrogant to me, while I

watch my American born friends do so effortlessly. You can guess that my first job interviews in the US were complete failures because of this cultural difference. And because my interviewers had no cultural sensitivity, they experienced me as inept.

In the familiar Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke, Mary and Joseph find “no place in the inn.” In the biblical context of the time, this understanding does not make sense. No one would turn away a young couple in need, a woman in labor at the verge of giving birth. In fact, the opposite would happen. People would not only take them in, but they would fetch a midwife, find resources to help, apologize for whatever is lacking. The Christmas story interpreted by western white protestants is quite different than interpretations from other cultural settings. The ability to recognize that is cultural sensitivity.

Sense of humor, respect and courteousness, expressing or hiding emotions, mannerisms, and more, all are shaped by cultural norms. I keep my own calendar, although I can ask Kellie Ramirez to keep it, but to my Armenian sensibilities, that feels disrespectful. I keep my own calendar because I want to be respectful to all and want no one to feel that they are not important enough for my attention. This is due to cultural difference. So, I continue not to interpret it as disrespectful when others ask me to communicate with their admins to schedule meetings with them. This means that I have to do all the work. I have to adjust and adapt continually to the culture in which I live. No one adapts to mine. And this is what’s exhausting for those of us from non-dominant, minority and immigrant cultures. We have to do all the adapting, all the time, reinterpreting, explaining and taking care of ourselves, so we are not hurt or harmed by the unawareness of others.

We need to continue learning about CS so we can be safe and scared communities for all.