



**A sermon by E. Scott Winnette
May 3, 2020
Called Beloved ~ John 10: 1-10**

How many weep watching *It's A Wonderful Life*? George Bailey's is back to reality and on the bridge asks Officer Bert. "Bert? Do you know me?" Bert replies, "Know you? Huh. You kiddin? I've been looking all over town trying to find you." The Holy Shepherd says to us, "*I came that you might have life and have it to the full.*" A full life is an abundant life where Maker God knows us, Creation call to us, our friends know our names. It's abundant life knowing God is for us, like a herder like Laurie and her baby goats protecting, and providing. The Holy desires we thrive.

I love this poem of S. H. Payer. "*LIVE each day to the fullest GET the most from each hour, each day, and each age of your life. Then you can look forward with confidence and back without regrets. BE yourself -- but be your best self. DARE to be different and to follow your own star. And don't be afraid to be happy. ENJOY what is beautiful. LOVE with all your heart and soul. BELIEVE that those you love, love you. ...No matter how troublesome the cares of life may seem to you at times, this is still a beautiful world -- And you are at home in it, When you are faced with a decision, MAKE that decision as wisely as possible -- then forget it. The moment of absolute certainty never arrives; ... ACT as if everything depended upon you, and PRAY as if everything depended upon God.*"

The periscope today is rich in metaphor. It is a proverb, a parable, a riddle ripe with meaning. Today, I yearn for you to simply receive the Holy love it shares, the individual love, a love just for you, a love tuned to your name. In John's Gospel are many names for Jesus. Jesus is Infinite Cosmic Logos and Jesus is a pasture-walking Shepherd. Imagine constellation's arms pick us up placing us in a cosmic lap, the sun and moon, winds and waves tenderly rub our heads and personally whisper our names.

Shepherd is an abundant life name. Jesus as vine to us branches - an abundant life name? Jesus, the eternal water giver, the bread of life. Even Jesus the gate, the protecting

gate. The thieves and bandits of the parable refer to people who exploit others; they represent power-hungry, stealing, parasites and predators. The gate excludes stink bug people, parasites and predators.

Gates mark boundaries, the spaces between our coming and our going, the places between our individualism and our community. Jesus calls us out of ourselves, into the world, even electronically out to love and serve. There are so many needs, so many ways to serve. Watch and plan to sign-up for Community Reach's Online Gala – May 30. And prepare to combat prejudice and meanness. St. Catherine's Church Wheaton/Silver Spring was desecrated with upside down crosses and other stupid symbols. It's a congregation with a strong Latino presence that has suffered prejudices for years. Consider sending a love note with your support. I can get you an address. We are called out of ourselves to serve and then Jesus calls us by name to return home, to be comforted in community, to rest together.

Imagine being a beloved sheep at the end of a day. The sun's heat is drawn away with its light; it's growing cold. You are warmed to know you're going to the huddle. With a skipping lilt you canter to her loving voice; she calls to you. You pass the gate and drop down next to another's warmth. Sigh a deep refreshing sigh; the abundant day is over. The shepherd holds you from wandering into danger, holds you fast against predators, holds you embraced by each other. You might ask God, "Do you know me?" Hear God's reply, "Know you? You kiddin?" Abundant life encircles you. Amen.