

**Sabbath Moments**  
**A Service of Healing and Wholeness**  
Sunday, January 25, 2009, 6 p.m.  
Southport Presbyterian Church  
The Toney Chapel

*Shepherd Us...*

Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80:1)

**The Lord is my shepherd.** (Psalm 23:1)

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11)

**“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”** (John 10:14-16)

As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. (Ezekiel 34:12)

**The shepherd was committed to his flock... The enormous amount of time he was obliged to spend with his flock prevented him from taking part in normal social activities, including religious observances. The image of God as a shepherd thus conveys the idea of the total commitment of God to his people.**  
(Alister McGrath, *Knowing Christ*)

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” (Luke 15:3-7)

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

**I was brought up in the Irish countryside, and remember often seeing flocks of sheep wandering aimlessly around the countryside, giving every impression of being lost. Left to themselves, sheep have a habit of straying and wandering off into dangerous countryside, getting stranded on hillsides. It is the shepherd who keeps the sheep on safe ground and ensures that they have food and drink. To liken the Lord to a shepherd is to emphasize his constant presence with his people and his gentle guidance as he tries to protect them from the dangers which life offers and to bring them to a place of plenty and safety. (Alister McGrath, *Knowing Christ*)**

“It is no accident that God has chosen to call us sheep. The behavior of sheep and human beings is similar in many ways... Our mob instincts, our fears and timidity, our stubbornness and stupidity, our perverse habits are all parallels of profound importance. Yet despite these adverse characteristics Christ chooses us, buys us, calls us by name, makes us His own and delights in caring for us.” (Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*)

**I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands. (Psalm 119:176)**

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. (Isaiah 40:11)

**For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Peter 2:25)**

Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel. May we remember that, like sheep, we are prone to wander. May we remember that we have a Shepherd to whom we may speak. You have promised to guide us, provide for us what we need, and be with us always. May we know your shepherding care and your loving, healing presence. We pray in the name of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. Amen.

**God be with you as you enter a new week.**