



Gay Street United
Methodist Church



Homemade E-devos

April 28, 2022

Reflection— Rev. Karen Oehl

Is God Chasing You?

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Psalm 23:6, King James Version

Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life.

Psalm 23:6, The Message

My dog Jack loves to play chase. And by that I mean he wants us to chase him. He will sometimes fetch a ball and bring it back to us, but mostly he wants us to chase him and try to get the ball from him. When he is playing with other dogs he is willing to chase them a little bit, but he keeps trying to get them to chase him. And he is disappointed if I do not at least try at night to get his bedtime dental treat from him. Chris is much better about this, getting into the game of chasing him, hiding, running from room to room, and more. Jack loves to be chased.



In language about our relationship with God we use the word “follow” very often. We are followers of Jesus, we follow God’s guidance and laws, and of course if God is the shepherd, we are the sheep who follow. Or not.

If you really think about it or have watched a shepherd at work, it is more likely that the shepherd is on the side or behind, keeping an eye out that the sheep are safe, guiding them so that they do not go too far to one side or the other, or go astray. The task of the sheep is to keep moving until they get to the green pastures or the still waters.

That is why the newer translations of the last verse of Psalm 23 give new meaning to words that are so familiar. The beloved version in the KJV talks about goodness and mercy following. That sounds much more passive. But the Common English Bible says “pursue” and *The Message* says “chase.” *God is chasing us! God’s love is chasing us! All the days of our lives. Not only is God keeping an eye out that we don’t stray, God is hurrying after us, reaching for us so that we can be extra secure and loved.*

As inheritors of John Wesley’s marvelous understanding of grace, we get this action of God. Wesley described the *prevenient grace of God as grace that pursues us, woos us, is chasing after us before we have done anything to deserve it or find it. God is chasing us so that we can know the rest of the grace: justifying and sanctifying.*

This Sunday we will be talking about the idea that we are not only the sheep, but also act as shepherds, loving others as Christ, the Good Shepherd, loved. I am not so sure that I want to be a sheep. But I would not mind being my dog Jack, looking at the chaser with a big grin on his face and his tail wagging. Yes, God, I want to play with you! Here I am!