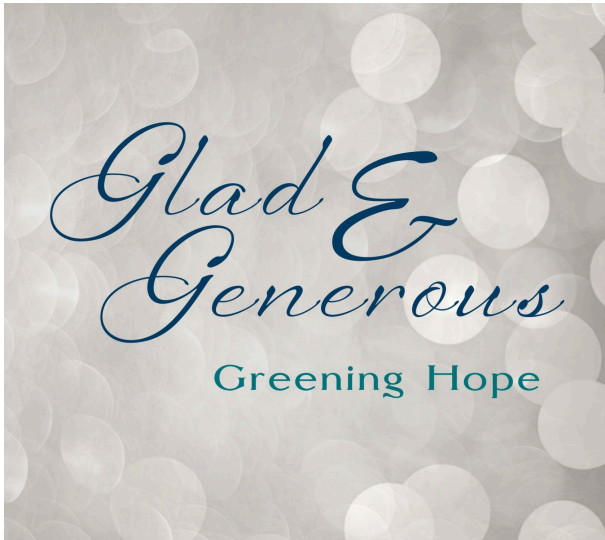


GLAD & GENEROUS: GREENING HOPE

September 14, 2025

Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



Psalm 23

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.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. Have you heard or read this Psalm before? In what context? Has it been important or especially meaningful to you?
3. The Psalmist speaks of green pastures and still waters.
 - a. How does experiencing or observing nature help you find perspective, calm, or healing?
 - b. In what natural places do you find peace, tranquility, or a sense of safety?
4. In what ways has God been present with you in difficult times?
5. In what ways might this Psalm bring hope?
6. What do you think it means that God prepares a table in the

South Elkhorn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

4343 Harrodsburg Road, Lexington KY 40513

859-223-1433 southelkhorncc.org

presence of enemies? What might that mean or look like in our lives today?

7. Sometimes we are resistant to the pause and perspective we need. The Psalmist writes that God *makes me lie down* (v.2). What cues, signals, or friends help you sense it's time (or even past time) to pause and gain a fresh perspective?
8. St. Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th-century Christian mystic and Abbess, wrote about *viriditas*, which means the greening power of God. This is the spiritual force within creation that drives all life toward healing and wholeness. It is observable in flowers blossoming and vegetation adapting to new conditions, and we can become aware of it within ourselves. God remains at work within us to help us heal, grow, and find restoration.
 - a. Where do you notice this idea in Psalm 23?
 - b. How might Christ be an expression of *viriditas*?
 - c. How have you experienced a drive toward healing, growth, or wholeness in your own spiritual journey, or observed it in others?