

Today's Gospel from St. John provides an instruction for us. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. "The sheep hear his voice" and they follow him. The Good Shepherd "calls the sheep by name and leads them." The sheep follow the Good Shepherd because "they recognize his voice."

Craig and Kristel Phenninger are the proud and joyful parents of Nash. When Kristel was pregnant, she and Craig talked to Nash. Nash heard their special voices as he was developing and growing. He heard their expressions of love and concern, delight and curiosity, tenderness and empathy. Nash knows the voice of his good shepherds--- Mom and Dad. At this point, he is also familiar with other good shepherds in his life: his grandparents, aunts and uncles, maybe cousins. All of these relatives want to lead Nash toward abundant life. They and we, as a faith community, want Nash to be safe, protected, and free from all harm. We want Nash to follow our inspiring example, to be attracted to what is good, and to be the radiant image of God in which he has been created. We want Nash to grow in the practice of the faith; to come to know Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Ultimately, we want Nash to trust that we have his best interests at heart in what we say and do. Years from now, Nash will join us in becoming a good shepherd for others.

So, Craig and Kristel, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, cousins and members of our faith community: Continue to be good shepherds. Lead one another, as Jesus leads us, to a more abundant life.