

July 25, 2021
The Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

Today is the first of five Sundays with gospel readings from John 6, the first four of which focus on Jesus as bread of life. Today Jesus feeds thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. What we have, what we bring to Jesus' table, seems like it is not nearly enough to meet all the needs we see around us. But it is not the adequacy of our supplies or our skills that finally makes the difference: it is the power of Jesus working in the littlest and least to transform this world into the world God desires, a world where all the hungry are satisfied.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, the God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy.
Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sins.

God, our provider, **help us. It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you. We take offence at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again to you. Where else can we turn? Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world. Amen.**

Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, ✙ the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life. **Amen.**

GATHERING The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING SONG *EvLW # 413 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!*

1. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
 Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
 Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
 God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
 casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
 cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
 which wert and art, and evermore shalt be.

3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
 though the eye of sinfulness thy glory may not see,
 only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
 perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Gracious God, you have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth. Grant that we may know your Son to be the true bread of heaven and share this bread with all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

2 Kings 4:42-44

Today's reading is part of a larger section of 2 Kings that describes the miracles of Elisha, the successor to Elijah. Here the prophet gives food to a hungry crowd. Though there is not enough food to go around, Elisha trusts God, who provides enough and even more to satisfy the need.

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to [Elisha,] the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, "Give it to the people and let them eat." But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" So he repeated, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left.'" He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 3:14-21

We have been rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, which surpasses all human knowledge. Because Christ dwells in our hearts, our lives are continuously strengthened and empowered by the ongoing presence of the Spirit.

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. **Amen.**

A LITANY BASED ON THE PSALM FOR TODAY

You nourish us, O Lord, with the fruits of the harvest. **The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.**

You have populated the Earth and the seas. **The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.**

Vines and trees, bushes, and plants, all grant us what we need. **You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.**

We give you thanks, O God, for all you have provided. **You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.**

For farmers and farm workers, we give you thanks. **The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.**

For those who work to preserve and prepare the food, we give you thanks. **The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.**

For those who transport it, and those who sell it, we give you thanks. **You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.**

Make us ever grateful, O Lord God, for all that you have given us. **The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. Amen.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 6:1-15

Alleluia. A great prophet has risen among us! God has looked favourably on us! *Alleluia.* (Luke 7:16)

In John's gospel, the miracles of Jesus are called "signs," because they reveal the true character of God. As such, they remain within the mystery of God and cannot be brought under human control.

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so, they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also, the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So, they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

EvLW # 710 *Let Streams of Living Justice*

1. Let streams of living justice flow down upon the earth;
give freedom's light to captives, let all the poor have worth.
The hungry's hands are pleading, the workers claim their rights,
the mourners long for laughter, the blinded seek for sight.
Make liberty a beacon, strike down the iron pow'r;
abolish ancient vengeance: proclaim your people's hour.
2. For healing of the nations, for peace that will not end,
for love that makes us lovers, God grant us grace to mend.
Weave our varied gifts together; knit our lives as they are spun;
on your loom of time enrol us till our thread of life is run.
O great weaver of our fabric, bind church and world in one;
dye our texture with your radiance, light our colours with your sun.
3. Your city's built to music; we are the stones you seek;
your harmony is language; we are the words you speak.
Our faith we find in service, our hope in others' dreams,
our love in hand of neighbour; our homeland brightly gleams.
Inscribe our hearts with justice; your way--the path untried;
your truth--the heart of stranger; your life--the Crucified.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation. We pray for the church. Bless the ministries of our neighbouring congregations especially those in the Elmira Ministerial. Empower churches throughout the world and encourage missionaries who accompany global neighbours. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration, that all people may know your loving works. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and come to the aid of those enduring sweltering heat. Nurture wheat and barley crops grown for the nourishment of your people and conserve aquatic habitats and fish populations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who govern. Cast out arrogance, selfishness, and corruption and instruct those who lead to practice compassion and humility. Inspire them with a vision of the common good and a commitment to ensure that all who hunger are fed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those bowed down by heavy burdens: those who are unemployed or underemployed, those unable to find housing, and those suffering with the anxiety of the pandemic. Console those who grieve and hear the cries of those who call to you for healing especially Beryl, Daryl, Eleithia, Ferolyn, Jordon, Pat, and those we name quietly in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this congregation. Deepen our resolve to use what we have to serve those in need. When we worry that we do not have enough resources for ministry, assure us of your abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those who have died. As you sustained them through all their days, so dwell in our hearts, that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SENDING SONG **EvLW # 631 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling***

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
 Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
 Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
 visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.
2. Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast;
 let us all in thee inherit; let us find thy promised rest.
 Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
 end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.
3. Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
 suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
 Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
 pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise!

BLESSING

The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, + be upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon	July 26	Genesis 18:1-15	Philippians 4:10-20	Psalm 111
Tue	July 27	Exodus 24:1-11	Romans 15:22-33	Psalm 111
Wed	July 28	Isaiah 25:6-10a	Mark 6:35-44	Psalm 111
Thu	July 29	Exodus 12:33-42	1 Corinthians 11:17-22	Psalm 78:23-29
Fri	July 30	Exodus 12:43-13:2	1 Corinthians 11:27-34	Psalm 78:23-29
Sat	July 31	Exodus 13:3-10	Matthew 16:5-12	Psalm 78:23-29
Sun	Aug 01	Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15	Psalm 78:23-29 (24, 25)	Ephesians 4:1-16 John 6:24-35

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