



THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 25, 2021

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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. The psalms speak of God as the One who feeds humanity: You open wide Your hand, O God, and give us food in every season. In Christ, God satisfies our thirst with living waters and feeds us with living bread. These images speak of our desire for communion with the One Who is greater than our frailty and fears. They are biblical images of Christ's presence among us in the waters of baptism and the bread and cup of the eucharist.

Today the Church celebrates the feast of St. James, Apostle.

✠ GATHERING ✠

OPENING HYMN

Awake, O Sleeper

#745 (blue)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

on screen

GREETING

on screen

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. 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 Lord.

C. Amen.

✠ WORD ✠

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 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." ⁴³But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" So repeated, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.'" ⁴⁴He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

L. The Word of the Lord. C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM 145:10-19

All Your works praise You, O LORD,
and Your faithful servants bless You.

¹¹**They make known the glory of Your kingdom
and speak of Your power;**

¹²that the peoples may know of Your power
and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.

¹³**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;
Your dominion endures through-out all ages.**

¹⁴The LORD is faithful in all His words
and merciful in all His deeds.

¹⁵**The LORD upholds all those who fall;
He lifts up those who are bowed down.**

¹⁶The eyes of all wait upon You, O LORD,
and You give them their food in due season.

¹⁷**You open wide Your hand
and satisfy the needs of every living creature.**

¹⁸The LORD is righteous in all His ways
and loving in all His works.

¹⁹**The LORD is near to those who call upon Him,
to all who call upon Him faithfully.**

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, ¹⁵from Whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I 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, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to Him Who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

L. The Word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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HOLY GOSPEL: St. John 6:1–21

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.

C. Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following Him, because they saw the signs that He was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with His disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When 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?" ⁶He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He was going to do. ⁷Philip answered Him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?"

¹⁰Jesus 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. ¹¹Then 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. ¹²When they were satisfied, He told His disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When 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."

¹⁵When 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.

¹⁶When evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they wanted to take Him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

P. The Gospel of the Lord. C. Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Break Now the Bread of Life

#235 (grn)

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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BLESSING OF FAREWELL FOR RACHEL WOLLUM

SHARING THE PEACE OF THE LORD

ANNOUNCEMENTS

✠ PRAYER ✠

OFFERING/OFFERTORY



Re - mem - ber and re - jice, re - newed by floods of grace.
God, bless us by your grace; re - mind us of your care.



We bear the sign of Je - sus Christ, that time can - not e - rase.
Re - new - ing Spir - it, fill us now, in - spire our work, our prayer.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P. Merciful Father,

C. we offer with joy and thanksgiving what You have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of Your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of Him Who gave Himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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✠ SENDING ✠

BENEDICTION

P. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. May you be rooted and grounded in His love.
Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C. Amen

CLOSING HYMN

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

#754(blue)

DISMISSAL

P. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

THOSE WHO SERVE:

Ministers: All the People of God Presider: Pastor Ellen Munter

Musician: Lou Knutson Reader: Sara Wollum

Camera: Josh Sumption Projection: James Kamrath/Kendon Knutson
Katie Munter/Sara Wollum

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Emily Morton, Angie Denelsbeck Anderson, Shirlee Gabbert,
Bill and Karen Pohlen, Carol Moon, Gail Sumption,

July 11, 2021

General: \$1,380.00 (\$729.50 received through eGiving)

Savings: \$1,000 in memory of Norma Dovre (\$925.00 for Digital Resources, \$50.00 for Organ, \$25.00 for Vacation Bible School)

July 18, 2021

General: \$925.50 (\$429.50 received through eGiving)

Savings: \$75.00 in memory of Jean Dillon for Vacation Bible School.

A Feast of Grace

Five loaves of bread. Two fish. Thousands of hungry people. Baskets and baskets of leftovers. Today's gospel is a story of startling juxtaposition and miraculous transformation.

It is a story in which God comes in the way God always does—in ordinary elements and imperfect circumstances. Jesus gathers up perceived scarcity, holds questions and fears of inadequacy, and turns meager offerings into a feast of grace for all. And there is enough—enough for everyone to have as much as they could ever want, with plenty to spare. It's a feast that meets physical needs and nourishes physical bodies, and through the mystery of faith also unites the feasters with God and one another.

As we hear these words from John, we too are invited to this ordinary and holy feast. It's a feast that crosses time and space to welcome us in and to send us out. We too get to rejoice in the transformation that happens when we show up to worship, with hands open to receive and a deep hunger for new life.

We recognize our hunger in confession and prayer. We feast on the promises of God's word. We taste God's abundance at the communion table. We are drenched in God's generous love in the waters of baptism. We are joined with the other perfectly ordinary and holy banquet-goers as we raise our voices together in song. And we extend this exuberant lovingkindness to the world when we go forth from worship, filled with hope and prepared for service in Christ's name.

With Christ as the host, there is forever enough food for all. Christ's table is one brimming with grace. All of us are invited, just as we are, with whatever meager offerings we have. For we can trust that in Christ, it is more than enough.

Upcoming Commemorations

Sunday, July 25, 2021

James, Apostle

James and his brother John were the sons of Zebedee, fishermen by trade before their call from Jesus. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred, and his death is the only one recorded in scripture (Acts 12:1-2).

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Johann Sebastian Bach, died 1750; Heinrich Schütz, died 1672; George Frederick Handel, died 1759; musicians

These three German-born musicians have done much to enrich the life of the church. Schütz was an early master who focused on settings of biblical texts. Bach wrote over 300 cantatas along with works for organ and instrumental pieces, and has been called the "fifth evangelist" for the way he proclaimed the gospel in music. Handel's great work, Messiah, is a setting of scriptural texts.

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany

Friends of Jesus, Mary and Martha are remembered for the hospitality of their home that they offered him—Martha focused on serving their guest, and Mary on listening to him. Their brother Lazarus was raised from the dead as a sign of the greater resurrection to come.

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, died 1030

Considered the patron saint of Norway, Olaf went from a life of piracy to becoming Christian and declaring himself king of Norway. He revised the laws and tried to administer them fairly. Driven from Norway in a rebellion, he was killed in battle trying to regain his kingdom.

Acknowledgements

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