

First Lutheran Church – ELCA
Worship Bulletin: 11th Sunday after Pentecost
August 8, 2021

GATHERING MUSIC

“Redeemer, Savior, Friend” & “We Are an Offering”

WELCOME

OPENING SONG – “Come and Fill Me Up”

I can feel You flowin’ through me.
Holy Spirit, come and fill me up,
come and fill me up.

Love and mercy fill my senses.
I am thirsty for Your presence, Lord;
come and fill me up.

Lord, let Your mercy wash away all of my sin.
Fill me completely with Your love once again.
I need You. I want You. I love Your presence.
I need You. I want You. I love Your presence.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 142)

Gracious God, **your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he may live in us and we in him, and that, strengthened by this food, we may live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blesses is the man who takes refuge in him!

P: I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

L: My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear, and be glad.

P: Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!

SONG – “Taste and See” (ELW 493)

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Oh, taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times.
Praise shall always be on my lips;
my soul shall glory in the Lord;
for God has been so good to me.

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Oh, taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us all praise God's name.
I called the Lord, who answered me;
from all my troubles I was set free.

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Oh, taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

Worship the Lord, all you people.
You'll want for nothing if you ask.
Taste and see that the Lord is good;
in God we need put all our trust.

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Oh, taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

FIRST READING: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Christians are called to be imitators of God. This does not mean Christians are perfect. Rather, the Spirit is at work in our lives so that our actions and attitudes genuinely reflect the love and forgiveness we have received through Christ and his death.

²⁵So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the

needy. ²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³²and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. ^{5:1}Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ²and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL: John 6:35, 41-51

After feeding more than five thousand people in the wilderness, Jesus teaches them regarding the true significance of this remarkable sign.

³⁵Jesus said to [the crowd,] “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ⁴¹Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴²They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” ⁴³Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN’S SERMON

CHILDREN’S SONG – “To Be Like Jesus”

To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus!
My desire to be like Him!
All through life’s journey
from earth to glory,
My desire to be like Him.

MESSAGE – Pastore Jeanette

I often have that moment in the grocery store aisle as I’m looking at the bread choices. Do I go for the really healthy whole grain option... or the white, cheap comfort food option? Now, I’m not picking on anyone and their bread choices, we surely love our comfort foods in the McCormick household some days to be sure. But, on my better days, I choose the healthy option and, surely, I find that once I make that choice, I enjoy it, and feel more full and satisfied afterwards.

Metaphorically speaking, the struggle or thought process going through my mind in the bread aisle is often the same type of internal struggle going on in my life in so many ways.

Do I spend my time doing things I know will build up my life: spending time with family, saying words of encouragement, praying, worshiping, resting, exercising and enjoying nature?

Or, do I spend my time worrying, gossiping, focusing on the negatives of the world, snacking on junk food and binge watching tv? Do I spend my time working with no rest?

Do I focus on what God is doing through me and in spite of me? Or do I focus on only what I am doing... or not doing?

Do I view my money as a tool to bless myself, bless others and build up God's community on earth? Or do I view it as something to hoard, something to use to gain power or prestige, something that help me get more and more, and something that can give me security and fix all my problems so I don't have to trust God or the people around me?

Though it seems obvious when you list out the comparison which option should be chosen, it's easy to, in the middle of daily life, chose the option that is quick, easy and feels good... even if it only feels good for a minute. It's easy to settle for the metaphorical cheap bread options instead of the hearty, life giving bread choices.

In last week's Gospel we heard the words "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life." Today we hear Jesus say, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.. I am the bread that came down from heaven... I am the living bread..."

If you are like me, you are coming here and find your mind thinking about the upcoming week, what you will do today, the conversation you just had and more. As you find your mind wandering, I hope a small question enters into your mind about each thing you are thinking about. "Is this the bread of life?" "Am I working for something that will satisfy or something that is perishing?"

It is no coincidence that Jesus says, "I am..." We might miss it, but Jesus says this again and again in the Gospel of John. I am the light of the world. I am the door of the sheep. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the good shepherd. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the true vine. When Jesus says these things, he is showing us the many ways Jesus loves us, serves us, provides for us and is with us. His words also remind us that He, Jesus, is the great I Am. In Exodus, in the burning bush, we hear God telling Moses to tell the Israelites that "I Am" has sent him (Moses) to free them from slavery." Through his words, Jesus is reminding us that He is more than teacher, prophet or messenger, He is God, He, too, is the Great I Am.

The Good News for us is that even on the days where we give into our unhelpful desires and practices, when we chose the cheap white bread, if you will, the I Am is still the I Am for us. Jesus notes that he gives his "life for the world" and despite our choices, Jesus still saves us, loves us, redeems us, guides us and teaches us. Thanks be to God for this unfailling,

indescribable and never-wavering gift. But, we know our lives are more fulfilling when we feast on the bread of life just as our bodies are more fulfilled when we feast on the foods that build us up and satisfy.

I have been listening to “Unlacing the Heart: Connecting With What Really Matters” by Henry Freeman. In his book, he recounts many of his stories as a seminarian at Yale, a community volunteer, an observer and volunteer during the El Salvadoran Civil War and as a Fundraiser for a Quaker College. Through all these things, he talked about how money, time and talents were used to help people connect to what really matters. He notes that he has seen as a fundraiser that he is not successful when he is solely focused on getting someone’s money. Rather, for an encounter to be successful, he needs to see how he can invite someone into a shared vision and dream for the future, an opportunity for them to be a part of something that is life-giving and meaningful to their soul. He notes that sometimes the gifts he receives are large, and other times not, but when money is used as a tool to connect people to experiences, efforts and opportunities that give life to themselves and others, it is always a win.

In his book, he retells his own story about bread. Henry was working in Yale’s center for service and community engagement (Dwight Hall) when a woman named Dianne came to visit him. Dianne, Freeman recalls, was a Southern lady and a wife of a graduate student. Therefore, she noted, she had some spare time on her hands and also loved to bake bread. A few days prior to speaking with Freeman, a man had asked her for money for food. Therefore, she and her friends decided they wanted to host some of the homeless folks they saw around the New Haven campus for a meal. Her vision was not just to feed hungry people but, instead, to host meals for people who were hungry and welcoming guests, a notable difference for both Dianne and Henry. Henry had recently felt very supported and encouraged in his own philanthropy work, and, therefore, decided to invest in Diane’s dream. He gave her \$20 from his desk drawer. That \$20 bought posters which were used to announce the opening of the Community Soup Kitchen at a room of a local church. The first Saturday, there were 4 guests who loved the soup, the conversation and especially Dianne’s homemade bread. The next time 8 people, then 16, then 24. After 6 months, the program had to move to a large activity hall in an Episcopal church, where it remained. The kitchen was packed Monday-Saturday for multiple hours during the middle of the day, both with volunteers and recipients alike. The budget and program continued to grow but one thing remained. This was more than a place to receive food, it was a place to feel welcomed and at home.

Another man also named Henry became involved. Some days Henry would help with kitchen, others he’d receive food. He’d always be an hour early and would always announce that he and Henry Freeman were like brothers because they had the same name.

Fast forward a while, and some of the Yale students were organizing a hunger walk. Part of the funds raised would go towards the Community Soup Kitchen. Jane came by Henry Freeman’s office and noted that she “... wanted to help people...” In conversation, it became evident that Jane was from a wealthy New York family and was privileged in the eyes of society but lacking in confidence and self-worth.

The day of the hunger walk arrived and Henry had decided that he should accompany Henry Freeman in the van as they patrolled the route for anyone who might need assistance on their

walk. Freeman recalls in his book that he surely had less excitement for the situation than Henry did, as, though he liked the idea of the walk, it was a Saturday he was giving up being home with his family. At any rate, they headed out, only to encounter Jane who had sprained her ankle on the walk. The Henrys helped Jane and her friends into the van and they started talking and laughing and sharing stories.

As they went by the Community Soup Kitchen, the excited Henry jumped to the window and exclaimed, “Jane, Jane there is the soup kitchen! There is the soup kitchen! If you are ever lonely or hungry come down to the soup kitchen! We will talk to you and feed you some soup and you won’t be lonely anymore.” Tears started to roll down Henry Freeman’s face as his initial reluctance for the day subsided and he realized the power of the moment he was witnessing.

Each of these people: Henry Freeman, Dianne, Henry and Jane, were all looking for the bread of life, and they found it in bread shared in community with each other. None of these people settled for the quick and cheap options of isolation, remaining with people in your own social circle, the nagging feeling that something might fail or the fear that comes with trying something new. Instead, they found the bread of life. In order to truly feast on this bread, it required dedication, love, courage, vulnerability and patience. But, the great I Am appeared in their community and their midst.

May we learn from their stories and have the boldness to live lives that are always seeking the Living Bread, too. Amen.

SONG – “Christ, Be Our Light” (ELW 715)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.**

**You are with us now.
Your are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.**

You are our God. We worship you.

OFFERING/SPECIAL MUSIC – “The Potter’s Hand”
Beautiful Lord, wonderful Savior,
I know for sure all of my days are held in Your hand,
Crafted into Your perfect plan.

You gently call me into Your presence,
guiding me by Your Holy Spirit:
teach me, dear Lord, to live all of my life
through Your eyes.

I’m captured by Your holy calling.
Set me apart; I know You’re drawing me to Yourself.
Lead me, Lord, I pray.

Take me, mold me, use me, fill me;
I give my life to the Potter’s hand.
Call me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me;
I give my life to the Potter’s hand.

You gently call me into Your presence,
guiding me by Your Holy Spirit;
teach me, dear Lord, to live all of my life
through Your eyes.

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Call me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me;
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Take me, mold me, use me, fill me;
I give my life to the Potter’s hand.
Call me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me;
I give my life to the Potter’s hand.

OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 144)

Generous God, **all good gifts come from your gracious hand. We offer you these, the harvest of our time and labor. Make us wise stewards of all your gifts, that your name may be exalted in all the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

PRAYERS

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

For the church of Christ in all its diverse forms. For mission developers, new mission starts, and all communities of faith exploring new models of ministry for the sake of the gospel. For congregations facing difficult decisions about their future. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the health and well-being of creation. For shade trees that provide refuge from the hot summer sun. For lakes, rivers, and oceans contaminated by pollution and all who lack clean water. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those called to positions of authority in our legal system, we pray. For judges, lawyers, law clerks, and court employees who ensure the fair administration of justice. For corrections officers and prison chaplains, that they would deal mercifully with those who are incarcerated. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who cry out to you in their affliction. For exiles, refugees, and others who face long and difficult journeys, uncertain about the future. For all who mourn the death of a loved one. For all who are sick (especially) **Members:** Al Luing, Janice Berger, Sandy Rogers, Todd Hallstrom, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson; **Members in Nursing Homes:** Albert Mattisen, Bobbie Elvin, Sandra Marsh; **Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender; **Family Members & Friends:** Arlene (Fern Burmeister's sister), Rita Zinnel (Natalie's mom), Butch Zeiner (Valerie Veen's brother), Maverick Thalberg (Fern Burmeister's great-grandson), Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son); **Our service men and women and Love INC.** God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For this assembly gathered around your table, we pray. For those among us who bake bread and prepare the vessels for our communion celebration. For those who bring the food from this table to those who are homebound or hospitalized. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who have been raised to eternal life, we give thanks. With (Dominic, name/s, and) all the saints we praise you for the bread of life that keeps us in your love forever. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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 (ELW p. 145)

Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING (ELW p. 146)

Go out and imitate God, living in love.
Put your hope in God's Word
and let your own words be truthful and constructive.
May sin rouse your anger,
but never let anger cause you to sin.
Don't allow any room for evil.
And may God always hear your voice.
May Christ Jesus raise you to new life;
and may the Holy Spirit nourish you for the life of love.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

SENDING SONG – “Go in Peace and Serve the Lord”

Go in peace and serve the Lord.
God is calling you today.
Go and tell gospel news ev'rywhere.
God in peace and serve the Lord.
God is calling you today to bring truth and love to ev'ry nation.

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