

August 2nd Worship
9th Sunday After Pentecost

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to
generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.**

**We fail to believe that you provide enough for
all.**

**We abuse your good creation for our own
benefit.**

**We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.**

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

By your grace, forgive us;

through your love, renew us;

and in your Spirit, lead us;

**so that we may live and serve you in newness of
life. Amen.**

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Prayer of the Day

Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance.

Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Lesson – Isaiah 55:1-5

¹Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;

and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.

²Why do you spend your money for that which is
not bread,

and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.

³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to
you,

because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of
Israel,

for he has glorified you.

Gospel – Matthew 14:13-21

³Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds

away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”¹⁸ And he said, “Bring them here to me.”¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

When I was a child growing up at Luther Park, every Thursday, and maybe some of you have experienced this, the staff would prepare a Christ Walk. Campers and visitors would be led around camp where they would see scenes from the life of Christ acted out by the counselors and other staff members.

There was one summer when I was a bit younger where this story, our Gospel text for today, was one of those scenes. There is a character in the Feeding of the 5,000 story that doesn't make it into Matthew's account, but does appear in John, and he is the “Little boy from town.” That particular summer, I got to be “the Little Boy from Town.”

In John's gospel, when they're wondering how they're going to feed the crowd that had gathered, the crowd that was hungry and thirsting for what it was that Jesus had to say, and then later hungry and thirsting for a literal meal, one of the disciples says, “Teacher, here's this boy who has this basket of food.”

Now at Luther Park for the Christ Walk we took some translational liberties and gave the “Little Boy from Town” this line, and it was my line that summer: “I have food. I can share.” Now again, unfortunately “The Little Boy from Town” doesn't make it into Matthew's gospel. We simply have the disciples saying, “all we have are these five loaves and two fish.”

This story has become one of the most popular tellings of the miracles of Jesus. It's one of the most readily available, easy to tell about stories of the miracles that Jesus did in his ministry. When he looked out at the hungry crowd, and looked upon them with compassion – which he does often when crowds press upon him to hear what it is that he has to say – and tells the disciples to give them something to eat. To not send them away. “Don't send them away. You feed them.”

Did you catch that? Jesus says “they need not be sent away. Bring them here to me, give them something to eat.” And this is where we get the feeding of the 5,000.

Miracle is defined as: A surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of divine agency.

And for millennia, we have thought of the miracle of this story the fact that Jesus fed all these people. And we've thought of the miracle of this story that not only did Jesus feed all those people, but he fed all those people with five loaves and two fish. And yes, that is miraculous.

But, what if – to relate this to ourselves as 21st Century People of Faith – what if we looked at a different part of the story as the miracle.

What might that be? Is it the disciples? Is the miracle that the disciples are starting to see what Jesus is about and sensing that these people need to be cared for? Is it that there are leftovers?

What if we think of the miracle of this story being the fact that they had the audacity to think that the little that they had to offer could be enough?

Because, when they're wondering how it is that they are going to feed this crowd, they do admit that there is something available. They didn't say we have nothing. They could have seen those five loaves and those two fish and that was going to be enough for them and only them, but they instead had the audacity to say they had something.

They could have seen the food they had as the food that was for them, but instead they saw a people that needed to be fed. They saw that people needed to be nourished and sustained for the mission and ministry of what Jesus was up to. And they said, "all we have to meet that need is five loaves and two fish."

It is something.

It is not nothing.

Is it enough?

So often in our world and in our lives we think that what we have to share isn't enough. So often in our world, in our lives, we think that this story and this message, and our own stories aren't enough to contribute. So often we think of ourselves as simply that five loaves and two fish looking out at a crowd of thousands of people hungering and thirsting for the Good News of God's Word.

We so often think that what we have to bring to the table is not enough, but the truth is as church, we may have only five loaves and two fish, but as church we have what this world needs.

As church, we have a five loaves and two fish feast that can feed God's people!

As church, we have this message and this call and mandate to see how it is that we can welcome others into God's fold.

As a church we have, in our five loaves and two fish, what it takes for the world to be fed and nourished.

And as church, we are faced with the question, "are we willing to do it like The Little Boy from Town in John's Gospel? Are we willing to say that we have food that we can share? Are we willing to do it?"

Or, are we like the disciples who initially implore Jesus to get rid of these people?

It makes me think of just last week and the way that Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd lived out being the church.

First, on Thursday as our Outreach Team and our Ruby's Pantry Folks, and our Shepherd's Closet volunteers teamed up with our Good Spirit At-Home-Mission-Trip youth collaborated to distribute ice cream and offer free clothing to children in our community.

Now, in the Toufar household we were able to bring home 4 cases of Halo Pop ice cream bars. Each case had six boxes and each boxes six bars so we were able to come home with 144 bars, and the kids were equally excited to eat them, as they were excited to offer them to the guys doing the landscaping in our yard. They would see one of them looking like they needed a break and they would run up and ask if they wanted mint or strawberry. And these children's faces lit up with the generosity of the moment.

Beyond helping with ice cream and clothes distribution our youth group last week engaged in many other forms of service in the community. They were supposed to be in Beckley, West Virginia, but soon realized they didn't need to travel to be the church, they could be church right here in their own back yard. Their five loaves and two fish were needed right here around the Chippewa Valley. They quickly learned that what they had to offer was enough for the people they served.

What you have to bring to the table is enough for this world.

What you have and what you are able to bring to the table, though you might feel like it can't feed all of God's people, is enough.

There is no limit on the love that God has for God's people. And that, People of God, is the five loaves and two fish that you have been given for God's world. Share it. And there will be leftovers. Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

You take resources that appear to be meager, bless them, and there is enough. May your church trust that what you bless and ask us to share with the world is abundantly sufficient. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Your bountiful creation offers sustenance and life for all creatures. Protect this abundance for the well-being of all. Reverse the damage we have caused your creation. Replenish ground water supplies, provide needed rains in places of drought, and protect forests from wildfires. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You offer yourself to all the nations and peoples of the earth, inviting everyone to abundant life. Bring the prophetic vision to fullness, that all nations will run to you and that nations who do not know you will find their joy in you. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Hear the anguish of tender hearts who cry to you in suffering and satisfy their deepest needs. Bring wholeness and healing to those who suffer in body, heart, soul, and mind, whom we name both silently and aloud. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You offer freely the fullness of salvation. Give our congregation such a welcoming heart, that our words and actions may extend your free and abundant hospitality to all whom we encounter. Be with us in the weeks ahead as we enter a time of intense listening, as we look to advance the mission of this place to be a neighborhood church, where each is known – seen – loved. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You gather your saints as one, united in the body of Jesus. Bring us with all your saints to the heavenly banquet. We remember with love and thanksgiving the saints we have known. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in
Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ,

Thanks be to God.

and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

The Leadership Team of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd is in the conversation phase of the process of considering the purchase of chairs (not folding chairs) for the sanctuary to replace the pews. Leadership feels that this is a move that thrusts Good Shepherd into the future, and the next 65 years, of being a neighborhood church. Here is what we believe chairs will provide:

- 1) Flexibility – from a worship standpoint chairs will allow for alternate arrangements for different services. There will be a standard set-up that the chairs are arranged in most of the time, but we are excited about the flexibility of what else could be. Not to mention allowing for different arrangement when we host concerts and other events.
- 2) Accessibility – The current arrangement of pews does not allow for wheelchair spaces without those folks sticking out into an aisle. With chairs, it would be easy to remove a chair at the end of an aisle when there are folks in wheelchairs. Also, chairs will be able to be spaced in such a way that makes rows easier to navigate than pews.
- 3) Cleanability – In the midst of a pandemic, and the chance that this is perhaps never completely eradicated, it will be important to clean as well as maintain proper distance once we are able to return to in person worship. Also, this is the first time in, perhaps, forever that the pews have been out of the sanctuary to properly clean and polish that surface.
- 4) Relatability – We have billed ourselves as a neighborhood church. The flexibility that this provides will aid us in becoming a partner in our community, and our church can be a more usable space for the community on more than just Sundays.

This decision cannot be made, however, without hearing from our membership. For the next two weeks we will be in a period of listening. We want to hear your thoughts on this possibility. We want to hear if you're in favor and we want to hear if you have concerns.

The question has come up regarding how this is going to be paid for, and what is going to happen to the old pews. Those are questions that will be answered at the Leadership Team's meeting this evening, Thursday the 30th. This is a process and decision that is not finalized. Leadership is discussing what the next steps are. We wanted to have our membership that receives the worship packets to have this information. Unfortunately, for you all to receive your worship information before Sunday, this needed to go out before those discussions happened. Feel free to call the church office, Pastor Josh, or Leadership Team President Matt Risen (715-559-7417) with your thoughts.

Thank you!

65 for 65 Appeal Update

Since May 17, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd has been in the midst of its 65 for 65 Anniversary Appeal. We are looking for 65 donors to give a gift of some form of 65. That could be \$6.50, \$65, \$650, or even \$6500 if you're feeling generous!

The donations from the 65 for 65 Anniversary Appeal will be used to propel Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd into the next 65 years.

To date we have received 59 donations totaling \$12,848.15! That is incredible and we are ever grateful for the generosity that you all have continually shown your church. If you're good with math, you probably noticed that we are looking for 6 more 65 for 65 gifts. Will yours be one of them?

Sanctuary Open for Prayer

Have you been feeling a disconnect from church, and perhaps a visit to church may be the salve your weary soul needs? On Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 am – 12 pm and 2 pm – 4 pm the sanctuary will be open, with properly spaced areas, for folks to come in and have a moment of prayer.

As you enter the building you will be greeted by a bottle of hand sanitizer, followed by a stand with masks on it. If you don't have a mask, you will need to wear one.

As you enter the sanctuary, you will find 3 locations for you to choose from for a time of prayer: By the stained-glass windows, by the Prayer Wall, and by the Baptismal Font.

At Home Communion Liturgy

+ WORDS OF INSTITUTION +

(Holding the bread) In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you Do this for the remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me." When we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(Tear the bread, share with each person – invite them to dip into the cup of wine/grape juice) +

LORD'S PRAYER +

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION + In the mystery of Christ's resurrection, you shine light into the darkness, provide water that brings new life, and give bread that nourishes your people and frees us from our fear. Help us be witnesses of the resurrection and empower us to show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. AMEN +

BLESSING EACH OTHER + Using your pointer finger, dip it in the bowl of water, and make the sign of the cross on another's forehead or the back of their hand saying, "Child of God, marked as God's own, Jesus love you and will love you forever." Take turns until each household member has been blessed.