

July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

### Introduction to the Day

When Amos reports his vision of God judging Israel for its mistreatment of the poor, he becomes a threat to the power of the priests and the king. John the Baptist also speaks truth to power, and Herod has him killed. In Herod's fear that Jesus is John returned from the dead, we may hear hope for the oppressed: all the prophets killed through the ages are alive in Jesus. We are called to witness to justice in company with them, and to proclaim God's saving love.

### 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 sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

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 offense 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 Songs

“We Are Called”

#720

### Prayer of the Day

O God, from you come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### Lesson: Ephesians 1:3-14

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

## Children's Message

### Gospel – Mark 6:14-29

<sup>14</sup>King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." <sup>15</sup>But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." <sup>16</sup>But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

<sup>17</sup>For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. <sup>18</sup>For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." <sup>19</sup>And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, <sup>20</sup>for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. <sup>21</sup>But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. <sup>22</sup>When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." <sup>23</sup>And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." <sup>24</sup>She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." <sup>25</sup>Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." <sup>26</sup>The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. <sup>27</sup>Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, <sup>28</sup>brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup>When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

### Message

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

This does not sound like good news.

There are glimpses of almost, that don't quite reach the point of being good. There are glimpses of Herod giving into the power of God's love for God's people, but ultimately he gives into his own power, and other's perceptions of his power.

But again, it is so close to being different.

Herod's wife, who is the former wife of Herod's brother, wanted John dead because John kept telling Herod that she shouldn't be Herod's wife. Herod lies to her and says, "no problem, I'll have him beheaded." But he just couldn't do it, "for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man," and instead had him protected.

Herod KNOWS John to be a holy man, and he is perplexed by the things that he says, so perplexing that Herod likes to listen to what he has to say. I imagine this arrangement that Herod has with John to be a pretty cushy "jail" situation. He seems to have an affinity for John, and I imagine he frequently goes to hear what John has to say.

So, life goes on for some time with the assumption that Herod has followed the wishes of his wife and has had John killed. On his birthday, his daughter has performed for the esteemed guest and he tells her that he will give her anything, even offering half of his kingdom!

She hasn't a clue what to ask for, so she goes to her mother – who of course wants proof that John has indeed been killed. "Out of regard for his oaths and for the guests" – the appearance of power and honor among his high-profile guests wins out. At this banquet are his courtiers, officers, and leaders of Galilee – people who are sure to want to have the King's time. He knows what he is doing. He knows that his status and being viewed as

a man of his word who will stick to his oaths, is of utmost importance in this situation. So, going against all that he believes to be true of John, he sends for his head on a platter.

There was hope for Herod. John had clearly, seemingly, gotten through to Herod.

But, power got in the way.

This still doesn't seem like good news.

Is the good news that we, like John, are to carry the promise of the Good News of God's Love with us even if it brings death? Hardly seems like good news, other than knowing what is waiting for us in heaven. But is that good news for here and now? Hardly.

Maybe we've looked to far, or perhaps glossed right over it. That is understandable when we've got a story of a guy being beheaded. It is an attention grabber indeed.

Look back at the first half verse of this Gospel text.

"King Herod heard of *it*. What is *it*? What is Mark referring to when he says this?

Well, the Gospel story we heard just last week. Jesus has just empowered his disciples to go and take nothing with them, staying in places that welcome them until it is time to go and shake the dust off of their feet in the places that don't.

The Good News of God's Love for all people has started to spread like wildfire. People are hearing of Jesus. They are confused. In their minds, John the Baptist is dead, Herod claims he must have risen (though he knows he isn't actually dead).

Herod, seeing the need to squelch the spread of this Good News, first tries to lie about it. Hoping to ease the worries of those who may be threatened by that which Jesus preaches (which John pointed to in his ministry) claims that he has had John killed.

The whole thing, the confusion, the search for the good news in this Gospel text, is set off by that very thing. The *it*. The Good News.

The Good News of God's Love for God's people is the *it* that King Herod has heard of. *It* is the thing that has folks thinking a prophet is among them, and others claiming the "voice of one crying out in the wilderness" has raised from the dead. *It* is unsettling for those in power. *It* has those in power scrambling to maintain status. *It* has the powerful tripping over the truth.

*It* could not be contained.

Not by killing John.

Not by killing Jesus.

Not by going after their disciples.

And there sure isn't going to be any one that stops you and me.

The Good News is that we are hearing this story today. The efforts to shut it down did not work. THAT is the Good News, that we hear *it* still today.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

**Song of the Day**

**"Just A Closer Walk with Thee"**

**#697**

**Apostle's Creed**

## **Prayers**

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

*A brief silence.*

Holy parent, you welcome your people into one family and gather all things to yourself. Bestow your grace upon your beloved church, lavish your wisdom upon us, and redeem us from our faults, that by our witness all might praise your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Awesome Creator, you steadfastly tend to the smallest of seeds and the mightiest of sycamore trees. Spring up green growth from the earth, nourish the growth of fruit, grain, and other crops, and bless the work of farmers and laborers. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of the oppressed, turn the ears of those who are in power to the voices of prophets in our own day. Protect those who speak difficult truths when it is risky to do so. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of strength, you are near to those who endure difficulty. Comfort all who are survivors of violence, guard the refugee and the immigrant, and protect all those who are victims of prejudice and discrimination. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of love, we pray for this holy house and all those who worship here. We pray especially for those whose efforts behind the scenes often go unnoticed; for the custodian(s) and maintenance workers, for our office staff, other ministry leaders, and for all of our volunteers. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

We thank you, God, for the saints, martyrs, and prophets who have died in the faith. We remember those in this community who have recently died, praying especially for the family of Dick Dean and Helen Hanson. United with them as God's children, assure us that we are yours forever. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

**Amen.**

## **Offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

Jesus, Bread of life,  
you have set this table with your very self,  
and called us to the feast of plenty.

Gather what has been sown among us,  
and strengthen us in this meal.

Make us to be what we receive here,  
your body for the life of the world.

**Amen.**

### **Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.**

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me."

Once you've taken the elements say, "Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**"

## **Lord's Prayer**

### **Blessing**

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

**Amen.**

Go in peace, you are the body of Christ.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!**

Please note that the Tuesday morning Bible study and lunch will now be on Wednesdays at 11 a.m. All are welcome!

### **News from Good Shepherd Outreach**

This year Good Shepherd Outreach is partnering with other churches in We Care Eau Claire. This organization was created to support the Eau Claire School District staff and students – especially the students in need.

This year the distribution of school supplies and backpacks will be held August 16 at Phoenix Park, We are asking Good Shepherd members to help donate towards these school supplies with monetary donations so supplies can be purchased in bulk to stretch the monies as much as possible. **If you are interested in donating to Project Backpack, please send your donations to the church marked as such by July 21.** Or you can give online, selecting Outreach and in the memo add Project Backpack. If you have questions or interest in this event, contact the church office.

Outreach also took care of the bill for Roosevelt School's Weekend Kids Meals (\$2040) with thanks to you for your donations.

### **Altar flowers**

If you would like flowers on the altar in honor of a birthday, an anniversary, in memory of someone, or just because, please sign up on the flower chart on the bulletin board. The cost is \$22 and you can take them home following worship or the following week.

### **Re-Connect Opportunities**

We hope you will join us for any, or all, of these Re-Connect Opportunities throughout the week!  
Stop in for coffee and conversation at 9 am on Mondays. TUESDAYS be sure to stop by for Bible Study starting at 11, followed by Lunch and Laughter at noon. Thursdays we will have the sanctuary open for prayer for 8 am to 3 pm.

### **Offerings**

We appreciate all of you who have been donating through online giving, as well as those mailing in their offerings.

The 3rd Quarter Well Offering / Mission Offering will be going to Outreach to help with costs for Weekend Kids Meals and Project Backpack (We Care Eau Claire).