

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost – July 14th, 2024

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.

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

And also with you.

Welcome

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 Hymn

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

#807

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.

Reading – Ephesians 1:3-14

³ 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, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ 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, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ 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; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel – Mark 6:14-29

¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰ 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. ²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²² 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." ²³ And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." ²⁵ 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." ²⁶ The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

The Gospel of Our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

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

Coming off the heels of Jesus sending His disciples out with nothing but the tunic wearing and the partner they're going with, Mark gives us the story of John the Baptizers death.

John's arrest is mentioned previously in Chapter 1, but beyond that there has been no mention of it since.

We get this story because the message that Jesus is preaching is starting to spread. People are hearing of it more and more and are talking about it ore and more. And King Herod gets wind of it. Jesus name had become known but they were still questioning who it was that was saying and doing what Jesus was saying and doing, and from where his powers are coming. Much like the people in his hometown questioned as well.

Some were saying this was Elijah. Some wonder if this is John the Baptizer raised from the dead. Others were saying that Jesus was a prophet, like one of the prophets of old. But Herod, for whatever reason, assures them that John the Baptizer, whom he beheaded, has been raised.

Why he did that, we do not know. Perhaps it is deflecting. Perhaps it is an attempt to quell the Jesus movement, to put to rest any idea of a resurgence of this message that John the Baptizer preached and continued to teach even from a jail cell.

And, what follows serves somewhat of a twofold purpose. The Gospel of Mark was written roughly 60 years after Jesus death and resurrection. So, as Mark is writing this Gospel 60 years later, he chooses to include in it the story of how it was that John the Baptizer died. And with it comes this gruesome aside of his beheading.

Again, this story seems to hold a twofold purpose.

The first comes in the context of what the readers would have just read Jesus had done. Jesus has sent his disciples out with nothing but the order to stay in the places that welcome you as long as you can, and stay in the unwelcoming places for as short as you can. Again, that is what they have just read before getting this gruesome aside.

Perhaps Mark is telling them, “oh, by the way, the work of carrying with you the story of the Good News of God’s Love for God’s People is dangerous work. It got John the Baptizer killed. So, tread lightly.” This perhaps amplifies the Jesus mandate to leave the unwelcoming places as soon as you can. It is dangerous work.

This also serves as a cautionary tale for those who want to put the importance of their power and privilege over anything else. We are given glimpses throughout this gruesome aside that the hard heart of Herod is maybe being softened. We are told he enjoys listening to John from the jail cell.

But. When confronted with doing the right thing, or gripping his power more tightly in the presence of his guests of status and privilege, Herod chooses power. Again, Mark offering the readers of this Gospel a cautionary tale. Might is not always right.

However, more than a cautionary tale, perhaps this gruesome Gospel aside serves more as a message of hopeful encouragement for those who will come to read it.

First, we do see that the message that John the Baptizer preaches, which again, is a message of repentance and the forgiveness of sin, is a message that can and will soften the hardened heart. Herod enjoyed listening to John preach and teach. When he was arrested in Chapter 1, John was placed in a jail cell, which, we come to learn here was for his protection. Herod wanted access to him. Herod’s wife had John arrested because John spoke out against their marriage for reasons we won’t go into. She did not like him. But Herod did. Herod feared John “for he was a righteous and holy man. He was greatly perplexed by his teaching and enjoyed listening to him.

And, when the wish came that John’s head be delivered on a platter, Herod is grieved.

John’s message was getting to Herod. His hard heart was softening. There were glimmers of hope. This is a message of hopeful encouragement for those who feared bringing the Jesus message out into the world. Mark was telling them, “it works. Keep at it.”

The second note of hopeful encouragement was the response of John’s disciples (much like Jesus disciples response in his death). Upon his death, John’s disciples went to those who had his body and asked it be handed over to them so that they could do with it what they needed to care for it.

Yes, this is them simply carrying out the duties that they ought for the person they loved, admired, and followed, but they were duties carried out in the face of the very people that had him killed. If that isn’t a message of hopeful encouragement and strong faith in the face of all that might want to wipe you out, I don’t know what is.

As people of faith we are continually inundated and confronted with situations in which we are challenged to share the Good News of God’s Love for God’s People in the world, and so often the other option is clinging to the perceived power and status that we believe we have.

Mark in this Gospel is calling us to the courageous act of bringing the Good News of God’s Love for God’s People to a world that desperately needs it. No matter what.

Our Gospel text for today is a reminder that the message of last week is a message that can indeed change the world. Taking with us nothing but that Good News can and will change the world. The Good News started to soften the heart of Herod. In the end of Mark’s Gospel the Good News of Jesus we see starts to soften the heart of Pilate.

Mark continually calls us into faithful witness of the Good News that is God’s Love for God’s People. Thanks be to God. AMEN

Hymn of the Day

“Faith of Our Fathers ”

#812

Apostle’s Creed

Prayers

One in the communion of saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices in prayer.

A brief silence.

You gather your people into the body of Christ. Where your church is wounded, heal it. Where it is right, strengthen it. Where it is divided, reunite it. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

From before the foundation of the world, you are God. Revive ecosystems destroyed by human greed. Curb our desire to put wealth ahead of the health of all who call this planet home. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You establish equity and make justice. Within every nation, tribe, and land, cause laws to be written and customs to be observed that protect the most vulnerable. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

On the cross your beloved Son endured pain and death. Bring healing to those in need, hope to any in despair, and comfort to the dying. *(We pray especially for Matt, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Cherri, Peggy, John, Judy, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Dan and Sharon, Roger and MaryLee)* In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You send your Spirit into this community of faith. Empower our ministries that serve and build up local communities *(ministries may be named)*. Nurture our partnerships with other community organizations *(organizations may be named)*. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

All peoples praise you, O God. We give you thanks and praise for the lives of our loved ones who now rest in you *(especially)*. In the fullness of time gather us with all your saints in light. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Holy God, holy and merciful: into your outstretched arms we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Peace

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

Sacrament of Holy Communion

#471 & #483

Lord's Prayer

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.

Come!

Post Communion Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.

As you have nourished us in this meal,
 now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
 In your name we pray.
Amen.

Blessing

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

Sending Hymn

“Lead On, O King Eternal”

#805 vs. 1,3

Sending

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ!
Okay! We will! Thanks be to God.
 And all of Good Shepherd said,
“AMEN”

Your Generosity in Action:



2024 2nd Quarter Mission Offering:
 \$2,000
 to Luther Park Bible Camp for the
 Covenant Retreat Center upgrades
 2024 3rd Quarter Mission Offering
 will be going to
 Lutheran Disaster Response!



THANK YOU!!

Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	\$13,349	\$9,324	\$4,025
	2023: \$26,173	2023: \$23,425	Checkbook Available thru June \$15,026





Happy Retirement

After 14 years at LCGS,
DeAnne Swenson
will be trading in her church keys
and keyboard for time with her
grandkids, time in her garden, and
time at her sewing machine!
Her last day will be August 29th.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

THIS WEEK we are going to be stripping and resurfacing
the floors in the upstairs hallways and Fellowship Hall.

We will need help with all phases of that project,
starting with the moving of all things out of those
spaces. If that's you, please contact DeAnne.

**NO CHILD
IN SCHOOL
WITHOUT
NEW
SNEAKERS**



Help us fill
Shepherd's
Closet with
sneakers for
their Aug. 7
Give-Away.

Shepherd's Closet



**Children's sizes 10-13
Girls/Women and Boys/Men size 1-8**

