

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost – July 28th, 2024

Introduction to the Day

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. Today Jesus feeds thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. What we have, what we bring to Jesus' table, seems like it is not nearly enough to meet all the needs we see around us. But it is not the adequacy of our supplies or our skills that finally makes the difference: it is the power of Jesus working in the littlest and least to transform this world into the world God desires, a world where all the hungry are satisfied.

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

“Praise and Thanksgiving”

#689

Prayer of the Day

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 Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading – Psalm 145:10-18

¹⁰ All your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.

¹¹ **They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,**

¹² that all people may know of your power and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³ **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout all ages.**

You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.

¹⁴ The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵ **The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season.**

¹⁶ You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷ **You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works.**

¹⁸ You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel – John 6:1-21

¹ Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ² A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ When 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?” ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” ⁸ One 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?” ¹⁰ Jesus 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. ¹¹ Then 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. ¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴ When 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.”

¹⁵ When 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.

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

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

Is this enough, among so much need?

We’ve all asked that question. Is the bit that I can do, what I have to offer, enough to actually make a difference.

Often, but not always, our answer to that question is, “no, my little bit won’t make a difference, therefore, why bother?”

The disciples in this Gospel text, in response to Jesus challenging them with the question: “Where can we get enough to feed them” tell him, “there is a boy here who has five loaves of bread and two fish.”

Now, this little fact gives us a glimpse into how immediate it was that the crowd came to be where Jesus was. I’d imagine this boy doesn’t normally just walk around with five loaves of bread and two fish. And, we know that from last week’s gospel text, and the chronology of events, that folks came from the whole region to be at Jesus and the disciple’s landing point as they crossed the sea. The word traveled so quickly and urgently that this boy was rushed away with excitement on his trip home from the market, to go and be and see where Jesus was.

So, here he is, in that crowd that numbered 5,000 AND women and children, when the disciples bring attention to him. “Here is a boy with five loaves of bread, and two fish. But what is that among so many people.”

But, Jesus continues to challenge them, push them, to experience the abundance that is God's grace and mercy.

"Make the people sit down." And he takes the bread and fish, gave thanks, and distributed it to all who were gathered.

Jesus takes the sentiment of "this little bit won't make a difference" and magically, by the literal grace of God, turns it into abundance. I have always thought of this miracle as the one where Jesus literally turns five loaves of bread and two fish into enough food for all to be satisfied AND have leftovers. And that is good. Maybe it was. That IS a miracle. But, what if we allowed ourselves to think about the miracle of this story a little differently.

What if the miracle of this story is that Jesus inspired those in the crowd to think about the person next to them and what they might need. And, there are two ways that I see that miracle playing out.

The first is that as the bread and fish were being passed around, everyone made sure that they didn't take too much SO THAT there was enough for everyone in the back of the crowd. If you've ever watched people go through a buffet, you know how much of a miracle that would have been. When I worked in the Luther Park kitchen we would frequently, almost every time, NEED to remind those that went first through the line that there were indeed others that needed to eat lunch that day.

The other way this miracle plays out is that Jesus inspired those in the crowd to realize that what they had with them was also enough to contribute to making a difference. Perhaps maybe, just maybe, the miracle here is Jesus turning the little bit that the boy had to offer into a teachable moment for those that thought that what they had couldn't make a difference, where they realize that their individual "not enough" as collectively more than they needed.

I struggle to believe that in that crowd of 5,000 people AND women and children, that this boy was the only one that had any food with him. Perhaps the miracle of this story is that Jesus, with this pithy little lesson of the boy with bread and fish, inspired the crowd to share what they, too, had brought and in turn created an abundance.

You see, when we tell ourselves that the little bit that we have to offer isn't enough and therefore we won't give it, that is selfishness. It is greed. We tell ourselves that it is self-preservation. We tell ourselves that "it isn't up to us." But, what we are really telling ourselves is that we are better off holding onto that which isn't enough to do something for the greater good, therefore I'll keep it for myself. And when we all say that, guess what, indeed no difference is made.

But again, this Gospel text shows us what happens when we DO BELIEVE that the little (or great) amount that we have to share is indeed shared.

- 1) The crowd was satisfied. From the little bit that was surely not enough, the end result was a satisfied crowd.

- 2) When the disciples gathered up the leftovers the fragments were enough to fill 12 baskets.

In our conversation at Bible Study on Tuesday morning there was a sudden shift as we discussed this phenomenon. What had been talk of what the true miracle of this text was, became a conversation focused on the excess and what they must have done with it?

Did they bring it to a food shelf? Surely there would be hungry people that they would encounter on their way home, after all, people came from all over the region.

People of God, when we allow ourselves to admit that maybe, just maybe, the little bit we have to offer can and will make a difference. For those in the crowd that day, the fearless childlike generosity of the boy with five loaves of bread and two fish inspired those in the crowd to be generous with what they had as well.

In a world that is so quick to look out for me, myself, and I first and foremost, and sometimes only, what if we, as people of faith, started to model what it looks like when we started to operate with the fearless generosity of that boy in the crowd. What if we boldly proclaimed with every act of generosity that the little thing that we do can and will inspire change for the greater good.

I truly believe that the five loaves and two fish that we might be thinking about in our lives is indeed enough to leave us all fed and nourished, and I think you believe it, too.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

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.

God of generations, you work in us far more than we can ask or imagine. Bless the church you have called into being across time and space, and fill it with the power of the Spirit for loving service. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of field and forest, streams and seas, you are the fullness of all things. As grains of wheat grow upon the earth and fish swim in the waters, sustain your creation. Protect harvests and give every person food in due season. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God beyond borders, you rule all in all. Bless the work of humanitarians and peacekeepers, shield those who live, work, or serve in harm's way, and bring an end to war and conflict (*nations and places may be named*). In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of healing, you open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. We remember any who are sick or suffering (*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*), families in our community who endure hunger, those who seek asylum or citizenship, and our beloved for whom death is near. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of grace, you root us and ground us in love. As you inspired our ancestors in this place in their ministry, sustain us also in new endeavors, that your glory may be made known, and your lovingkindness shared anew. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all, your love in Christ surpasses all knowledge. We give thanks for the departed who have come to know the fullness of your grace. Join our voices with theirs (*and with musicians Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Schütz, and George Frederick Handel*) and all the saints in singing your praises. 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

Hymns #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

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

#547

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:



Another project we were able to say YES to this summer - PATCHING HOLES IN THE PARKING LOT!

Yes, youve maybe noticed the lot is less of an obstacle course these days.

While we were able to say YES because of YOUR generosity, it is the generosity of the
Good Shepherd Foundation that covered this expense.

THANK YOU!!

Monthly	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
Financials	\$22,793	\$24,377	-\$1,584
to date:	2023: \$26,173	2023: \$23,425	Checkbook Available thru June \$15,026



WE provide the **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**
YOU provide the **BACKPACKS**
TOGETHER we provide the **LOVE OF JESUS**



Bring backpacks to any participating church by August 1st

To donate funds to help purchase school supplies go to:

www.wecareeauclaire.com

If you would like to purchase backpacks or just donate funds, all is appreciated by Aug. 1.

Kids Clothing Give-away

- Fall Clothing
- Shoes/Socks
- Underwear
- Backpacks
- School supplies
- Diapers/Wipes
- Toiletries
- Misc. Items

SIZES INFANT TO 14/16

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 7
10 A.M.-5 P.M.
 1120 Cedar St., Eau Claire
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
 Shepherd's Closet

Welcome Back Sunday and Fall Program Kickoff 2024

Sunday, September 8

Come for worship and stick around for fellowship and activities for all ages!

More details soon!