

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost – August 25th, 2024

Introduction to the Day

In today's gospel many people take offense at Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood; even many of Jesus' disciples peel off. This is the backdrop in John's gospel for Peter's confession of faith. "To whom can we go?" asks Peter, in words we sometimes sing just before the gospel is read. "You have the words of eternal life." In order to take such a stand, as Peter and Joshua did, Paul tells us to arm ourselves with the word of God.

We pray in the Spirit that we might be bold ambassadors of the gospel.

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

"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"

#857

Prayer of the Day

Ever-loving God, your Son gives himself as living bread for the life of the world. Fill us with such a knowledge of his presence that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life to serve you continually, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading – Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ^{2a}And Joshua said to all the people, ¹⁴"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

¹⁶Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷for it is

the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Children’s Message

Gospel – John 6:56-69

[Jesus said,] ⁵⁶“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

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

Year ago, right around the time that I began seminary, a dear friend and mentor of mine was going to be in the Twin Cities. At that time he was serving in Minot, North Dakota so the fact that he was in St Paul, not far from where I was living, had us making efforts to connect with one another during his time here.

After much effort, it came to be that our best option to get together was going to be while he was at the home of another friend of his. So, I found myself sitting in the backyard with a mentor, a seminary professor, and brother/friend Karl, who owned the house.

We sat there enjoying fellowship listening to the Twins/Yankees baseball game on the radio. It wasn’t well known that I was actually a Yankee fan, though that knowledge was out there. I tried my best to keep that under wraps and not expose my fandom, which worked well until something went in the Yankees favor. And, I reacted.

Karl the host asked, “you’re a Yankees fan, aren’t you.”

I sheepishly admitted, “yes.”

To which Karl responded by grabbing my beer and dumping it on the ground. I laughed and reminded him, “Karl, that beer came out of your fridge.” To which he responded, “oh yeah...” and got me another beer.

This story, this experience that has been sitting with me this past week encapsulates how I have come to understand John chapter 6, which we have been working our way through over the last 5 weeks of the Bread of Life discourse.

Throughout this discourse we continue to hear Jesus talk of the Bread of Life. That the Bread that he offers, Himself, is Bread that will not perish, but lead to life abundant, and life eternal. Throughout this chapter these passages teach us, Jesus teaches us, why this meal matters to and for us. Throughout this chapter these passages urge us, Jesus calls us, to more than just a meal.

It is in and through this meal that we receive life abundant, for abundant life. Jesus continually calls us into that abundance of God's grace. And knowing that it is that grace that Jesus calls us into is important. I would argue that God's grace is something that we often take for granted. Except when we really need it, and then realize it most. But God's grace is always there. God's grace is always active.

Many, I would guess, liken ourselves to the Disciple Peter, the rock on which the church would be built. He is the faithful one. He is the one continually claiming his fealty to Christ. Yet, we know that he, too, will have his slip-ups. Peter says something here, thought, that is important for us to hear. In saying what he says he owns a part of his past that to some extent we can all relate to.

In response to Jesus asking if any of the remaining disciples wish to leave, Peter says, "'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

1) He names that they've got nowhere else to go and that Jesus brings eternal life. But, perhaps more importantly he says,

2) "'We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'" We. Have. Come. To. Believe. Saying this suggests that believing hadn't always been the case. Not necessarily what you'd expect to hear from the Rock, but here we are.

We so often assume that we are all in that same "believe all the time, where else could we go" point in our journey. We look to the example of the disciples and think they just left everything and followed, when the truth is that they, too, had their own faith journey as this is all taking place.

The truth is, we have no clue where those sitting alongside us find themselves in their own faith journey. We haven't a clue where they are along the path called life. Which, again, is why it is important to hear Peter himself own up to the fact that believing wasn't always where he was at, because folks just like you and me can relate. But here we are.

So, being here we cling to what we do know. We cling to what we do preach. We cling to what we do profess. And, that is what Jesus tells us. This bread, this meal, is a meal of life eternal, life abundant. It is that promise that we cling to in some of life's darkest most difficult moments.

The story of my friend Karl came rushing back to me earlier this week as I sat down to start prepping for this sermon. Having read the text and started work on the worship packet, I did what I always do and took a detour to scroll facebook. And, it was there that I saw news of Karl's death. His wife shared, "(Sunday) afternoon, with family encircling him with songs & prayers & scripture, our beloved Karl met his maker face to face, and now rests in the arms of Jesus."

That is our promise. That is what we cling to. That we to would one day meet our maker face-to-face in life eternal, and until then we live life abundant knowing this meal is for you. God's grace is for you. Abundant life is for you. That is what all of this means.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Hymn of the Day

"Blessed Assurance"

#638

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Calling on the spirit of Wisdom to guide our hearts and our minds, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Wisdom has built her house. May the church be a house of wisdom for all who enter. May we continue to grow and stretch in ways we never thought possible. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Wisdom has mixed her wine. May the harvest seasons be plentiful this year. We pray for orchards, vineyards, farms, and all of creation (*local agriculture may be named*). Protect and conserve the earth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Wisdom has employed her laborers. Be with all who seek adequate employment. Guide our economic and governmental leaders to support the people of our world with fair wages and safe working conditions. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Wisdom has invited her guests. Make your presence known to all who feel lost, abandoned, or hurting at this time. Direct your spirit of care to all who seek healing and comfort (*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*). Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Wisdom has set her table. May this congregation be a welcome table to all who seek the refuge of God. Break down walls and barriers that prevent us from offering a seat at this table to anyone who comes. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Wisdom has shown her path of insight. May we journey on her paths, looking toward a bright future while remembering from where we have come. We give our thanks for those who have gone before us. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We lift up these prayers to you, gracious God. Receive them into your holy keeping.

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

Lord's Prayer

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

#471 & #483

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

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:



For the month of August our Mission Offering will be going to Fire Relief Efforts at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Longwood. This congregation lost their sanctuary and suffered some damage to their Parish Hall in a July 23rd Fire. Clean-up is underway and conversations about how/what to rebuild are taking place. Any bit that we can offer in support will go towards their future as God's people called to that place.

THANK YOU!!

Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	\$15,640	\$21,322	-\$5,682
	2023: \$20,879	2023: \$18,137	



Retirement Blessings

Join us August 25th to celebrate DeAnne Swenson and give God thanks for her 14 years of service to LCGS. We will recognize her with a blessing in worship and a time of fellowship following.





Stand In The Light Memory Choir
Where Words Fail, Music Speaks

FALL CHOIR REHEARSALS

Cathy Reitz and Kate Larson, *Musical Directors*

Anne Kubiadowicz, *Accompanist*

**People in the early to mid-stages of memory loss,
their care partners and singing volunteers come together
to share their love of music!**

No musical experience is necessary to participate.

REHEARSALS

Thursdays, 9:45 a.m. – 11 a.m.

August 22 – November 21, 2024*

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

1120 Cedar Street - Eau Claire

\$30 registration fee

***Last date for fall semester registration is September 12th**

*These sessions will be hybrid with the ability to attend in person
or virtually via ZOOM. Please let us know if you need
assistance getting set up on ZOOM.*

For more information call 715-210-4165 or write
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