

10th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 28, 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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 11:1-15

A reading from 2 Samuel.

King David takes Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, then eventually has her husband murdered. The king, who should be at the battle but stays home, is contrasted in this story with the loyal and upright soldier Uriah..

PSALM: Psalm 14

God is in the company of the righteous. (Ps. 14:5)

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:14-21

A reading from Ephesians.

We have been rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, which surpasses all human knowledge. Because Christ dwells in our hearts, our lives are continuously strengthened and empowered by the ongoing presence of the Spirit.

GOSPEL: John 6:1-21

In John's gospel, the miracles of Jesus are called "signs," because they reveal the true character of God. As such, they remain within the mystery of God and cannot be brought under human control.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Will There Be Enough?

"Will there be enough?" This is perhaps a question as old as humanity itself. Will there be enough money? Enough food? Enough time? It's a question that threatens to consume our faith communities. Will there be enough volunteers? Enough preachers? Enough money in the offering plate? Enough people in the pews? Will there be enough donations or energy or creativity to carry us through?

We aren't alone in these fears. The disciples asked the same of Jesus. "Will there be enough to eat?" Surely, a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish could never feed this crowd. Better to send the people away to fend for themselves.

Perhaps like the disciples, we tend to panic and turn inward when resources start to dwindle. And yet, again and again, God calls us together, taking our fears and transforming them into gifts of abundance. A few crumbs become a feast. A hungry crowd becomes a community bearing witness to God's grace.

This story is an antidote to our anxious times, when we are tempted to cling, to hoard, to squander away resources for an uncertain future. Miraculous things happen when we open our fists and trust that with God, all things are possible.

This is not an easy mindset to hold, so together, we practice! We practice a theology of "enoughness" each week when we share communion with one another. We witness the tremendous power of a little bread and a little wine to sustain us on our journey. We practice generosity when we pass the offering plate, turning our meager offerings into a gift for the greater good. We witness how the gifts and talents of a community come together to create something that on our own would never have been possible. Because, in Christ, there is always more than enough.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

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 (*Especially in Ukraine and Gaza*). 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 especially Sandra Gagnon, Karen Weigold, Keith Weckwerth, Shirley Glickman, Marilyn Schneider, Denita Wolfgram, Stephanie Yourth, Christopher Yourth, Linda Boland, Glenda Panke, Debbie Thom, Donna L Hoffman, Walter Hobden, Harold Yourth, Doug Sell, Danny Schultz, Erna Schruder, Bill Lorbetskie and those in long term care facilities and senior residences, 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.**

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 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.

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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