

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 18, 2021

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA



PRELUDE

*The Church's One Foundation*

Setting: Matthew Machemer

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #644 Sts. 1-2, 5

*The Church's One Foundation*

- 1 **The Church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word.  
From heav'n He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.**
  
- 2 **Elect from ev'ry nation,  
Yet one o'er all the earth;  
Her charter of salvation:  
One Lord, one faith, one birth.  
One holy name she blesses,  
Partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses  
With ev'ry grace endued.**
  
- 5 **Yet she on earth has union  
With God, the Three in One,  
And mystic sweet communion  
With those whose rest is won.  
O blessèd heav'nly chorus!  
Lord, save us by Your grace  
That we, like saints before us,  
May see You face to face.**

CONFESSIO AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
**who made heaven and earth.**

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

**But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and

confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

*(We observe a moment of silence for self-reflection.)*

Together we pray:

**Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

*KYRIE*

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

*GLORIA IN EXCELSIS*

**1 To God on high be glory**

**And peace to all the earth;  
Goodwill from God in heaven  
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!  
We praise and bless You, Father;  
Your holy name, we sing—  
Our thanks for Your great glory,  
Lord God, our heav'nly King.**

**2 To You, O sole-begotten,**

**The Father's Son, we pray;  
O Lamb of God, our Savior,  
You take our sins away.  
Have mercy on us, Jesus;  
Receive our heartfelt cry,  
Where You in pow'r are seated  
At God's right hand on high—**

**3 For You alone are holy;**

**You only are the Lord.  
Forever and forever,  
Be worshiped and adored;  
You with the Holy Spirit  
Alone are Lord Most High,  
In God the Father's glory.  
"Amen!" our glad reply.**

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Heavenly Father,  
**though we do not deserve Your goodness, still You provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your gifts, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**



*THE LITURGY OF THE WORD*

*FIRST LESSON (Be seated)*

Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*PSALM 23 (Read responsively)*

The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.

**He makes me lie down in green pastures.**

**He leads me beside still waters.**

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,**

**I will fear no evil, for you are with me;**

**your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me**

**all the days of my life,**

**and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)*

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

*GOSPEL*

Mark 6:30-44

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

## SERMON

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ:

In our Gospel reading two Sundays ago, we heard the story of Jesus sending out his twelve closest disciples to minister to the towns and neighborhoods of Galilee. As you may recall, the disciples were given authority over unclean spirits and told to pack light. Their mission was to lay some groundwork for Jesus' greater work among the people and to receive on-the-job training for future days.

By all accounts, the disciples were very successful in their work. We're told that "they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them."

Today's reading begins with those disciples returning from their mission. And as we see, the disciples are all abuzz about what had happened. The scripture says that they shared with Jesus "all that they had done and taught."

Perhaps it was because of that success that the disciples were also exhausted from their work. And as they arrived back from their travels, they didn't even have time to sit and eat. Jesus saw this and said: "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." How wonderful those words must have sounded! They all then boarded a boat and headed to the other side of the lake in order to enjoy some time away.

However, as we heard, the crowds of people saw the boat from the shore and raced around to see Jesus on the other side. And when the boat arrived, the people were already there. When Jesus saw them, he didn't shoo them away but had compassion on them and began to teach them once again.

This is the part of the story where I'm always surprised that we don't hear at least one of the disciples say: "Hey, what about our vacation?" I have to admit, that's probably what I'd say.

Jesus certainly knew the value of rest – which is why he invited the disciples to get away. But Jesus also knew the importance of his work and that it was critical to the well-being of the people. The people were like sheep without a shepherd – meaning they were without a leader and protector. They were not only hurting, but they were also vulnerable.

What's more, there was an urgency to accomplishing what Jesus needed to do. His time with them was short.

Over and over in the Gospels we see this urgency in Jesus' words and actions. Which should lead us to ask ourselves: "are we also urgent about Jesus' work? Or are we more worried about other things. Things such as our vacations?"

Today's reading is another of those scriptures that can remind us to find the right balance between work and rest. We need both. God calls us to work. And God calls us to rest.

As well, the reading should also cause us to consider that sometimes we will need to prioritize the work to which Jesus calls us over our perceived desire (and even need!) to rest. A rested body does no good if an emergency need is not addressed.

That message of sacrifice for the sake of called work is further highlighted as today's story progresses. When Jesus resumed his teaching of the people, the disciples got to take a little break. But the break didn't

last long. When the people needed food, Jesus suddenly called the disciples back to action, saying: “You give them something to eat.”

More work for the disciples. So much for that break.

Being a disciple of Jesus means being ready for his call and attending to his work. Even making sacrifices as needed.

That being said, Jesus’ words to his disciples here are meant to do much more than just reinforce this necessity. Even more, Jesus’ words are meant to challenge the disciples’ thinking on what is possible.

“You give them something to eat,” said Jesus. Right. But how could they? They barely had enough food for themselves. And nowhere near enough money.

“Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” they said. Of course not. It couldn’t be done.

Which then begs the question: Why would Jesus even ask them to do this if there were no possible way?

Well, maybe there was a possible way.

Sometime later, when Jesus traveled to Judea to teach, as recorded in chapter ten, Jesus made the statement: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” And the disciples, who were exceedingly astonished at this, said to him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

That’s the message Jesus wants his disciples to understand here in chapter six as well. With man, certain things are impossible. Many things, in fact. But not with God. All things are possible with God.

Jesus’ statement – “you give them something to eat” – should first be thought of as a test. That’s the word John uses in his Gospel to describe what Jesus was doing here. Jesus tests the disciples to see if they believe the impossible can be done. The disciples are to have faith. And they are to have faith in Jesus.

Once we’ve established Jesus’ words as a challenge regarding the possible, we can also then hear them as a challenge to the disciples’ choice of action. Going forward, will the disciples follow the command of Jesus and give people something to eat? Or will they only see barriers. Like lack of money. And then raise objections?

“You give them something to eat,” said Jesus. And these words are about so much more than just the food which feeds our stomachs. Oh, that food is important too. Jesus teaches us to pray that daily bread be accessible to all. And work for it too. But he also teaches us to remember that “man shall not live by bread alone.” Jesus is ultimately most concerned about our souls. He wants our lives to be holy. And he wants us to live beyond the grave.

The words of Jesus here are to be heard as a precursor of the command he would give to his disciples after his resurrection, when he said: “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (16:18). Jesus calls his disciples to feed others with the Good News of his salvation.

When the crowd that day received the bread and fish that Jesus had multiplied, we’re told that “they all ate and were satisfied.” And that’s what Jesus does. He satisfies our hungry hearts. He gives us the food which

we truly need – not just to live another day, but to live as God would have us live. And to live forever in his presence – in the peace and joy that only he can give.

In the story, we note that the disciples did indeed feed the people, just as Jesus commanded. But they did it with God's help. The disciples did the distributing. Jesus did the multiplying. The disciples couldn't feed the people without Jesus.

And this was an important lesson for them as well. Because when their time would come to be shepherds of lost sheep, they would need to rely on God's help. They would meet challenges they could not endure on their own. And they would never be able to satisfy hungry souls with just their own skill and effort.

But with Jesus, their shepherding was possible. With Jesus, they could feed people as God called them to do.

And, most importantly, with Jesus the disciples had the food which truly satisfies – Jesus himself. Jesus is the bread of life that nourishes and sustains the human soul.

But we will explore that lesson in greater detail in the coming weeks, as we turn to John's Gospel and hear from Jesus on the topic. Today we are to hear the call of Jesus to feed others and to trust that Jesus can do what seems to be impossible.

Jesus multiplies what we have. We may feel that what we give to others is paltry – just some words, some compassion and some hope. Perhaps some songs and prayers as well. And at church we add bread and wine. These seem quite insignificant compared to what the world offers – with its grand ideas, its powerful muscle and its endless innovations.

But we must remember – the multiplying power of Jesus is greater than all of these.

Jesus is the one who can take a few kind words and make a whole day turn out better. Jesus is the one who can use a grace-filled response to bring understanding and avoid anger.

Even more, Jesus is the one who can bring healing in response to our prayers. And Jesus is the one who can calm our fears and ease our troubles.

Most of all, Jesus is the one who can take away the guilt and consequences of our sin. He can do this because he has earned forgiveness for us – dying on the cross to reverse our judgment before the Father.

And through this forgiveness, Jesus then equips us to forgive others, making possible peace and reconciliation between people.

Here at the church, we practice the life of mission to which Jesus calls us. We gather and hear him teach. Then receive the sacred meal which he multiplies for us. Along the way we acknowledge our need, sing the Lord's praise (not our own), and do our best to model the grace which Jesus teaches.

These practices lay groundwork for Jesus' work among us. And give us good training for the work God gives each of us to do – in our homes, our jobs and our neighborhoods. Our call is to carry God's love and grace in the message of Jesus, lived and shared. We are to feed the hungry of this world with the good news of Jesus' salvation and declare the freedom it brings.

Jesus once fed 5000 with just a few loaves and fish. And Jesus still works miracles of feeding today. With God all things are possible. And he will provide as we turn to him in faith.

In the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

- 1 O living Bread from heaven,  
How well You feed your guest!  
The gifts that You have given  
Have filled my heart with rest.  
Oh, wondrous food of blessing,  
Oh, cup that heals our woes!  
My heart, this gift possessing,  
With praises overflows.
- 2 My Lord, You here have led me  
To this most holy place  
And with Yourself have fed me  
The treasures of Your grace;  
For You have freely given  
What earth could never buy,  
The bread of life from heaven,  
That now I shall not die.
- 3 You gave me all I wanted;  
This food can death destroy.  
And You have freely granted  
The cup of endless joy.  
My Lord, I do not merit  
The favor You have shown,  
And all my soul and spirit  
Bow down before Your throne.
- 4 Lord, grant me then, thus strengthened  
With heav'nly food, while here  
My course on earth is lengthened,  
To serve with holy fear.  
And when You call my spirit  
To leave this world below,  
I enter, through Your merit,  
Where joys unmingled flow.

*APOSTLES' CREED*

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen



*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH*

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

*The response to each petition will be:*

“Lord in Your mercy:”

**“hear our prayer.”**



*THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION*

*PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION* (Stand)

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

*SANCTUS*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord  
God of Sabaoth adored;  
Heaven and earth with full acclaim  
shout the glory of Your name.  
Sing hosanna in the highest,  
sing hosanna to the Lord;  
Truly blest is He who comes  
in the name of the Lord!**

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING*

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

*THE LORD'S PRAYER*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

*THE WORDS OF OUR LORD*

*PAX DOMINI*

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

*AGNUS DEI*

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
You take the sin of the world away;  
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.**

**O Jesus Christ true Lamb of God  
You take the sin of the world away;  
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,  
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.**

*DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)*

*The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all communicants. Masks should be kept on except for the moment of consuming the elements. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.*

*COMMUNION MUSIC*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread*

*Setting: Thomas E. Lock*

*POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)*

*BENEDICTION*

- 1 Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendor,  
First-begotten from the dead,  
You alone, our strong defender,  
Lifting up Your people's head.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Jesus, true and living bread!  
Jesus, true and living bread!**
  
- 2 Though the lowliest form now veil You  
As of old in Bethlehem,  
Here as there Your angels hail You,  
Branch and flow'r of Jesse's stem.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
We in worship join with them;  
We in worship join with them.**
  
- 4 Life-imparting heav'nly manna,  
Stricken rock with streaming side,  
Heav'n and earth with loud hosanna  
Worship You, the Lamb who died,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Ris'n, ascended, glorified!  
Ris'n, ascended, glorified!**

*ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)*

*DISMISSAL*

*POSTLUDE*

*Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor  
Setting: Donald Busarow*

Those serving:

Sunday, July 18, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter:

Comm. assist: Dede Dixon

Reader: Aaron Siebrass

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Jim Easterly

Comm. assist: Judy Koucky

Reader: Bill Muller

Acknowledgments

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