

JULY 25th, 2021 Pentecost 9 Service of Word and Prayer

We are using parts of the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126.. Listen to this in whatever place and whatever circumstance is best for you. May your family be blessed in this time together.

The Gathering

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

Call to Worship: You have gifted us with the senses of sight and of hearing. You have granted us the power of speaking words and the ability to take actions. Guide us to do not what we desire, but what is just and what is right. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn: LBW 459: O Holy Spirit, Enter In

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

The Lord be with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us Pray: Oh God, you see how we are busy with many things. Teach us to listen to your teachings and lead us to the one thing which will not be taken from us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Word

2 Kings 4:42-44

Psalms 145:10-18

Ephesians 3:14-21

Please rise for the gospel lesson. ***Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.***

The Gospel reading is from John 6: 1-21

6 1-4 After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee (some call it Tiberias). A huge crowd followed him, attracted by the miracles they had seen him do among the sick. When he got to the other side, he climbed a hill and sat down, surrounded by his disciples. It was nearly time for the Feast of Passover, kept annually by the Jews.

5-6 When Jesus looked out and saw that a large crowd had arrived, he said to Philip, “Where can we buy bread to feed these people?” He said this to stretch Philip’s faith. He already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered, “Two hundred silver pieces wouldn’t be enough to buy bread for each person to get a piece.”

8-9 One of the disciples—it was Andrew, brother to Simon Peter—said, “There’s a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But that’s a drop in the bucket for a crowd like this.”

10-11 Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” There was a nice carpet of green grass in this place. They sat down, about five thousand of them. Then Jesus took the bread and, having given thanks, gave it to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. All ate as much as they wanted.

12-13 When the people had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted.” They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves.

14-15 The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done. They said, “This is the Prophet for sure, God’s Prophet right here in Galilee!” Jesus saw that in their enthusiasm, they were about to grab him and make him king, so he slipped off and went back up the mountain to be by himself.

16-21 In the evening his disciples went down to the sea, got in the boat, and headed back across the water to Capernaum. It had grown quite dark and Jesus had not yet returned. A huge wind blew up, churning the sea. They were maybe three or four miles out when they saw Jesus walking on the sea, quite near the boat. They were scared senseless, but he reassured them, “It’s me. It’s all right. Don’t be afraid.” So they took him on board. In no time they reached land—the exact spot they were headed to.

July 25 Pentecost 9 (Lect. 17) Deacon Gretchen Peterson, Assistant to the National Bishop

Good morning, afternoon or evening. Thank you for welcoming me into your time of worship today. My name is Deacon Gretchen Peterson and I’m speaking to you from my home in Saskatoon, on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis.

Our Gospel story today is one we are all probably quite familiar with. Whether we heard it first in Sunday School class or during another Sunday worship time, this story is quite a well-known story of Jesus' ministry.

It comes pretty early on in the Gospel of John, so I was curious what had happened in the 5 previous chapters. John begins with "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus – the Word of God, come in flesh form, to Earth. To be God here on Earth. To remind us of God's ever presence on Earth.

here is no nativity in John, no birth story. We are taken right out onto the road, to walk with Jesus in his ministry amongst the people.

It's a fast-paced Gospel. We are splashed in the river Jordan as John baptises Jesus. We journey along as Jesus calls his first disciples and then performs his first miracle at the Wedding in Cana. We witness Jesus' temper as he cleanses the Temple, to rid the House of God of the money changers. We sit at the table and at the well, as Jesus visits with those who are considered not appropriate for him to associate with – Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Jesus performs two more miracles – healing a royal official's son and healing a lame man near Bethsaida, this latter one he does on the Sabbath. And we hear Jesus speak about the Son of God, come from God. We hear about the power and the life that this Son of God has. We hear about the promise of life, for all creation.

A quick introduction, a few miracles tossed in, two visits with questionable people, the foretelling of who Jesus truly is and the stage is set for chapter 6.

I'm trying to imagine what Jesus felt like at this moment. He's shown his disciples, the broader community, and the Pharisees some glimpses of who he truly is. And what he's all about. And why he's here. There's been some rockin' of the Empire's boat. And it sounds like he needs a bit of a break, hence why Jesus tried to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

But word has gotten out about Jesus. And a large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Word has gotten out.

One of the things I love about Jesus is that he pays attention.

We know he pays attention to his disciples, because he cares for them and is constantly trying to bring them up to speed on what the goal is for the ministry.

We know he pays attention to the Pharisees, because he's gotta watch his back and press against the rules and the authority while still trying to stay alive for as long as possible.

But most importantly, we know Jesus pays attention to the littlest, the poorest, the outcast because that is the true essence of who Jesus is.

Often, the message of this Gospel story is to revel in the miracle of taking 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and making that feed 5000 + people. With leftovers. Sure, that's pretty cool.

But perhaps there is another miracle. The miracle of paying attention to those around him and responding to their need.

Perhaps the miracle isn't that Jesus took the 5 loaves and 2 fish and turned that into enough food to feed the thousands.

Perhaps the miracle is that Jesus listened to the needs of the gathered. Their need to have food in order to participate in the Passover. Their need to be fed – not only with words – but also with sustenance.

Paying attention to this detail gives me more hope and more energy to continue participating in the ministry that God has called all of us to. We are all called to pay attention to those around us – the littlest, the poorest, the outcast. And to respond with abundance and overflowing love.

What does that look like for you in your life? Who are you called to pay attention to right now? What do you have that can be turned into an abundance of love and grace?

As I write this sermon, it is the beginning of July. The past few weeks have been tough. We are a country not only wrestling with COVID-19. But we are a country that is finally listening to what our Indigenous siblings have been saying for years and years. I have no idea what things will be like at the end of the month when you are listening to this sermon. But I know that the discovery of unmarked graves and children's' bodies in the grounds of Residential schools will not be something we are no longer speaking about. And I know that we will not be done the ongoing work of reconciliation, as that takes time and effort and we are called to be engaged in that journey for a long while yet.

Forest fires are raging across British Columbia, and we've just had a week of record-breaking high temperatures in the western provinces. It feels uncomfortable and not just because we are so hot. Also because it makes us worry about climate change and how we can make a difference in reversing the effects.

It is a hard time to speak into, especially with a message of abundance. When all around we see abundance – but an abundance of frightening, disturbing,

worrisome news. It is hard not to feel overwhelmed by the news every day, which doesn't seem to provide much hope some days.

Over the past few weeks, I've heard many Indigenous folks offer this up, in the midst of the recent discoveries. *First there is Truth, then there is Reconciliation.* We cannot move forward, in any area of our lives, without Truth first.

How can this Gospel today point each of us to a Truth in our lives? What can we take the time to truly pay attention to? What can we be motivated to engage in to spread the love of Jesus and the grace of God to those around us?

It might be the time to lean into something uncomfortable. It might be the time to learn something new. It might be the time to look around at the people gathered near us and listen to what they are saying, so we can work together to feed thousands.

And perhaps out of that paying attention and attending to the needs of those around us, we might be like Jesus today. We may not be able to take 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and create a feast for thousands out of it. But we can each pay attention. We can look around us and truly see who is gathered, who needs us, who needs God's love.

When we do this, who knows what may happen? Our baskets might overflow! Jesus paid attention to the people. He paid attention to their needs. And attended to them in an overflowing way. Because that's the kind of God we worship and serve. May we be such followers of Christ, that the abundance overflows to all around us. **Amen.**

Hymn: LBW 234 - of the Day: Almighty God, Your Word is Cast

Our Response

The peace of Christ be with you always and also with you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray **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.

Hymn: LBW 325 - Lord I Love You With All My Heart

Benediction

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter keep you in peace. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace, and remember your neighbor! **Thanks be to God.**