

Faith Lutheran Church

Sunday, August 2, 2020
9th Sunday after Pentecost



Call to Worship

Come to the water, all you who thirst—come drink deeply from the river of life.
Come to the water, all you who are weary—come rest in the quiet pools of God’s love.
Come to the water, all you who long for justice—come be renewed in God’s ever-flowing stream.
For God is here among us, washing away the dust and grime of our lives, and pouring out the Spirit on all who thirst.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Prayer of Confession (please join in confessing our sins)

Holy God, You have stricken us and will bind up our wounds. We bring to You all that is comfortable and self-satisfied in us, and we let it go. We bring to You the times we have avoided the struggle, taken the line of least resistance, colluded, and let them go. And because we believe that You do bless us, we bring to You our sins and questions and doubts and uncertainties, and we offer them. By Your grace, forgive us.

Declaration of Forgiveness

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all, and His compassion is over all that He has made.
The Lord is faithful in all His words, and gracious in all His deeds.
The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.
Hear the word of the Lord in Jesus: ‘Your sins are forgiven!’ **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Please join me in prayer:

Glorious God, Your generosity waters the world with goodness, and You cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- **Isaiah 55:1-5** *Eat and drink that which truly satisfies*
- **Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21** *You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*
- **Romans 9:1-5** *The glory of God’s people Israel*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 14:13-21

After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, His compassion for others will not allow Him to dismiss those who need Him, and He is moved to perform one of His greatest miracles.

¹³Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd; and He had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” ¹⁷They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” ¹⁸And He said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹Then He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our gospel reading for today from Matthew 14 started with, “Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by Himself.” Jesus wanted to be left alone. He was grieving. John the Baptist was dead.

Though related, their only interaction in the Bible was when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan. We know, though, theirs was a special relationship. John was sent to be the forerunner of Jesus, the proclaimer of who is to come. The one to prepare the way of the Lord.

In John 1:6-9, we hear, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through Him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.”

And in verses 29-34 we hear, “The next day (John) he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is He of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because He was before me.” ³¹I myself did not know Him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that He might be revealed to Israel.’ ³²And John testified, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him. ³³I myself did not know Him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” ³⁴And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.’”

John proclaimed to the world who Jesus is. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And now, as we hear today, John is dead and Jesus is grieving. He got in a boat and went to a deserted place all by Himself.

I've been in that boat before. Have you? Someone so near and dear to you has walked on. They've died. And all you want is to be left alone. To shed tears in private. To ponder the things that may forever go unsaid. Wishing you could hug that person or say 'I love you' or to – just BE with that person - one more time. I've been in that boat before. Many times. And I'm sure you probably have been too.

And yet, Jesus doesn't get far. Nope. He looked toward the land and realized the crowd was getting bigger and bigger. Men, women, and children were running along the shore trying to get Jesus' attention.

Jesus! Hey, Jesus! Can you please help me? Can you please heal me? Can you please feed me? The crowd was not going to leave Him alone. So, He went ashore.

As a pastor who struggles with this particular issue from time-to-time, I can say that Jesus didn't keep very good boundaries! At a time when He wanted and needed to be away from everyone and everything for rest, for a time of reflection upon John the Baptist's beheading, Jesus didn't keep very good boundaries. He must have skipped that part in the seminary's Pastoral Care class. Keeping good boundaries was one of those issues stressed over and over to us going through seminary. You are no good to anyone if you are burnt out. And yet, self-care, tending to your personal needs, and finding a balance between church life and personal life can be very challenging at times.

Boundaries in any profession can be difficult to keep. I know of bosses who take work home with them on weekends or pops into the office after hours because it's the best time to catch up on some paperwork. No one else is there to bother you. The phone isn't ringing either. Yes, you know who you are.

When I moved here to the U.P., I set a particular boundary for myself. I decided I would never set up a home office in the parsonage. I have the room for it. I have a tall bookshelf. I have a stapler and staples, pens and pencils, notepads, and sticky notes. I just don't have a desk. And, no thank you, I don't want a desk!

As much as I can, once I walk through the door at home, I try to decompress, to rest, to relax, and to focus on myself and my personal life. Now, it would be silly of me to say that I *never* get phone calls after I'm home or that I don't send emails or texts relating to church ministry after hours. I most certainly do. And there have been some trips to the office on Saturday evenings to put the finishing touches on a sermon. But at least I can say I *don't* have a home office!

Leaving any sense of peace and solitude behind, Jesus went ashore. He was immediately surrounded by people. Then Jesus did what Jesus does. He healed them. He restored sight to the blind, gave relief to the leper, hearing to the deaf, voice to the mute.

As exhausted as He was, as grief-stricken as He was, and as much as He just wanted to be alone, Jesus had compassion for the people and cured their sick.

When it was getting late and the disciples told Jesus to send the people away so that there would be time for them to go to the village and buy something to eat, Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; YOU give them something to eat."

Jesus had demonstrated compassion by healing the sick. Now He wanted the disciples to demonstrate compassion by feeding the people. Five thousand men, besides women and children. With five loaves, two fish, and a blessing from God, all were fed and there were plenty of leftovers.

Jesus' compassion for the sick and strength to do His work was a lesson to the disciples. Have compassion for the hungry and feed them.

Jesus' compassion for the sick and strength to do His work is a lesson for us. Have compassion for the hungry and feed them, have compassion for the lonely and visit them, the homeless and provide shelter for them, the naked and clothe them, those in hospitals and nursing homes and prisons, and reach out to them.

Jesus' compassion for the sick and strength to do His work is what we are to do in the world. **Amen.**

Blessing

And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (*Philippians 4:7*)

Prayers of Intercession

Confident of Your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

You take resources that appear to be meager, bless them, and there is enough. May Your church trust that what You bless and ask us to share with the world is abundantly sufficient.

Your bountiful creation offers sustenance and life for all creatures. Protect this abundance for the well-being of all. Reverse the damage we have caused Your creation. Replenish ground water supplies, provide needed rains in places of drought, and protect forests from wildfires.

You offer Yourself to all the nations and peoples of the earth, inviting everyone to abundant life. Bring the prophetic vision to fullness, that all nations will run to You and that nations who do not know You will find their joy in You.

You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Hear the anguish of tender hearts who cry to You in suffering and satisfy their deepest needs. Bring wholeness and healing to those who suffer in body, heart, soul, and mind, especially those we name at this time.(please share your prayer concerns).

You offer freely the fullness of salvation. Give our congregations such a welcoming heart, that our words and actions may extend Your free and abundant hospitality to all whom we encounter.

You gather Your saints as one, united in the body of Jesus. Bring us with all Your saints to the heavenly banquet. We remember with love and thanksgiving the saints we have known.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from Your love, we offer these prayers to You; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our Lord's Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...

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

Offering

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

On my own what I have to give doesn't amount to much in the light of all You have given to me and in the face of so much need. Put together as a congregation, what we offer You here in love becomes more, not simply added together, but somehow multiplied in its usefulness. We ask You to bless our gifts and with the addition of your blessing, just as it was with the loaves and fishes, there is enough for all. Amen

Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace; in the name of God the Father, God the Son+, and God the Spirit that makes us one. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go from here with joy and confidence, to love and serve God and one another.

Thanks be to God!

Sources:

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ELCA WORLD HUNGER **COIN BOXES**



The time has come! We asked that you continue to collect for this cause, “until further notice”...well here’s the notice!

Please begin returning your World Hunger Coin Boxes—Sunday, August 2nd. You may contact the church office by phone: 906-632-7246 or by email: faithlc1966@att.net to schedule a drop off time, or if you are attending our in-person worship services, you can just bring it with you. We would like to have all the coin boxes back by August 30th, so we can send the funds to the SYNOD by Labor Day. If you didn’t get a box but would still like to donate, you may write a check to Faith Lutheran Church with a Memo of: “World Hunger”.