



Introduction

Today is the first of several 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.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,

so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

In the name of ✚ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen**

Opening Hymn ELW # 689 / LBW # 409

Praise and Thanksgiving

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

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 Kings 4:42-44

Today's reading is part of a larger section of 2 Kings that describes the miracles of Elisha, the successor to Elijah. Here the prophet gives food to a hungry crowd. Though there is not enough food to go around, Elisha trusts God, who provides enough and even more to satisfy the need.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Psalm: Psalm 145:10-18

¹⁰All your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.

¹¹**They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,**

¹²that all people may know of your power and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;
your dominion endures throughout all ages.**

You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD,
and you give them their food in due season.**

¹⁶You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works.**

¹⁸You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully.

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

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.

Read the complete text [here](#).

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.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

This Sunday worship service is my 50th time worshipping with you. It has been a fun year. It has also been an interesting year for all of us.

There have been changes all the way through it. It almost seems like I have had two internships. The video season and the worshipping-in-person season. As you know, it has been continuously changing. That constant changing has provided some anxiety for all of us as we navigate worship and life today.

But, did not life before my arrival constantly change? Even before COVID came, life was always changing. We all got older. Hopefully, a little smarter along the way. Some folks moved or changed jobs in the last 18 months (like me). We all have met new friends or reconnected with old friends in the last few months. There have been births, baptisms, and all sorts of new things happening.

Then there has been some not-so-good changes, as well. For a while, it was hard to connect with people in person. Then there were the limits on what we could or could not do. People have gotten sick or passed away.

All of these constant changes make us, or at least me, wonder what is constant in life, besides change. For some reason, the John Wayne movie *Chisum* comes to mind. The movie focuses on how the West was changing. When Wayne's character first arrived to set up his ranch, a person and his or her pistol was the law. By the time the movie was taking place, the rule of law was moving in. Courts, law enforcement, and other methods of controlling violence were taking over. There was still some one-on-one conflict outside of the law, yet the aim was to tame the West.

A quote from John Wayne in that movie has always stuck with me, "No matter where people go, sooner or later there's the law. And sooner or later they find God's already been there." That 1970 movie made in Hollywood has the answer to my question.

God is the constant in our lives and in this world. The God that created the world, the heavens, and named the stars. God worked through Noah, Moses, Elijah, and all the other Old Testament prophets. 2,000 years ago, God came down in the form of Jesus.

With help of the Holy Spirit, today's Gospel reading helps us understand the power of Jesus and the connection to God the Father. Proof that Jesus is a part of the Triune God.

Jesus, not the disciples or someone else, provided the food for the 5,000 or so people that were in attendance. Typical for John's Gospel, the divinity and power of Jesus is emphasized. Only God could provide food for that many people from a few loaves of bread and some fish. According to the scholars, this also a reference to Jesus providing salvation to the masses by Jesus being the bread and wine in communion.

Then we have Jesus walking across the lake. I do not know of anyone, beside Jesus, who can walk across water. I tried a couple of times as a kid and it did not work too well. If I was in a boat like the disciples and saw someone walking across the water in a storm, I would be nervous as well. They call out to verify that it is Jesus. Now Jesus' answer in the Greek language is interesting. Jesus says "I AM." That is the same answer God gave Moses when Moses asked, "what should I saw your name is?" The Hebrew translation says, "I am what I am, or I will be what I will be." Jesus identifies himself as God. I AM.

Think about that. God has come to the crowd in the first half of the Gospel passage and to the disciples in the storm in the second half. Nothing but one change after another for those people, and God is traveling through life with them. Guess what? God is still here with us in all the changes that are going on now.

No matter where we go in life. No matter what changes take place in our lives, God is there. God is everywhere. God has been, is, and will be with us in all of life's journeys.

How does God do this? We have no real answer. As the Ephesians' reading points out, God is beyond our understanding and knowledge. Yet through God's work in our lives, we can explore and grow in God's love.

So, with all the changes that are coming in the next few weeks and months when you need to take a break and find a stable spot; listen for God. God is already here and guiding and loving us. Rest on and in God.

As we go forth in life, take comfort in Ephesian's 3:20-21. "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever."

God will live and journey through life with us and through us. We can always trust in God's faithfulness in loving us and accepting us. Go to God when we have any questions, problems, and/or blessings, for we serve and worship a glorious and wonderful God.
Amen

Hymn of the Day ELW # 515 / LBW # 235

Break Now the Bread of Life

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Apostles' Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**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.**

Prayers of Intercession

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Bless the ministries of our neighboring congregations. Empower churches throughout the world and encourage missionaries who accompany global neighbors. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration, that all people may know your loving works. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for creation. Protect areas experiencing floods; send rain to lands experiencing drought, and come to the aid of those enduring sweltering heat. Nurture wheat and barley crops grown for the nourishment of your people and conserve aquatic habitats and fish populations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who govern. Cast out arrogance, selfishness, and corruption and instruct those who lead to practice compassion and humility. Inspire them with a vision of the common good and a commitment to ensure that all who hunger are fed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those bowed down by heavy burdens: those who are unemployed or underemployed, those unable to find affordable housing, and those without health insurance. Console those who grieve and hear the cries of those who call to you for healing especially those we name now. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for our congregations. Deepen our resolve to use what we have to serve those in need. When we worry that we do not have enough resources for ministry, assure us of your abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for those who have died. As you sustained them through all their days, so dwell in our hearts, that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.

Farewell & Godspeed for Vicar Mike Lang

Gracious God, we thank you for the work and witness of your servant Mike, who has enriched this extended community of faith and shared his gifts with us. Now bless and preserve him at this time of transition. Day by day, guide him and give him what is needed, friends to cheer his way, and a clear vision of the ministry to which you are now calling him. By your Holy Spirit be present in his pilgrimage, that he may always travel with the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn ELW # 536

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Vicar Mike Lang.