

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
August 1, 2021, 8:00, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

J. Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION Apparently not satisfied by Jesus' feeding of thousands, some who were there press him for a sign of his power; perhaps it is daily manna they want. As always in John's gospel, when people want a sign, Jesus offers himself. He is the bread come from heaven to give life to the world. He calls us to come to him and believe in him and through that relationship to know the one who sent him.

THEME AND VERSE

Lord, take this patchwork collection of persons and quilt together your church. Like old pieces of cloth, take these words and songs and prayers, take our thoughts and inner hungers and join them all together into a new and living fabric—the purpose of which is to cover and color your world (or at least our corner of it) with grace and love. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

HYMN

“Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God”

W & P 34

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence, O Lord, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me;
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and renew a right spirit within me.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: John 6:24-35

Jesus teaches the crowds that all they need to do is to believe in the one God sent. In response the people ask for a miracle, mentioning the manna that the Israelites received when they were in the wilderness with Moses. In response Jesus tells them that he is the true bread of life and that whoever comes to him will never be hungry or thirsty.

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were [beside the sea,] they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you

saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you

believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the

bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of all mercy, come to the aid of your people.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. In your boundless compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life to the honor and glory of your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God has shown his mercy on us and forgives us all our sins. Through the power of Jesus Christ, may we be strengthened in all goodness. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we be kept to eternal life.

All to the glory of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"Why Am I Still Hungry?"

PRAYER OF THE DAY (inspired by Psalm 51:12)

Restore to us the joy of your salvation, Lord. May refugees be restored to safety. May flooded land be restored to fertile ground. May broken hearts be restored to wholeness. May fearful lives be restored to peaceful rest. May compassion fatigue be restored to hopeful perseverance. Restore to us the joy of your salvation, Lord. Grant in us a willing spirit to sustain us. Amen.

READING: Ephesians 4:1-16 *The apostle encourages the believers to accept one another, to live with humility, patience and love, and to nurture their unity, since God is also one. Within this united community each one has gifts that have been given by God's grace and each should use these gifts to build up the community, even as a body is united but has different parts.*

Therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens,

so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

HYMN

"Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer"

Green # 343

Guide me ever, great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty, hold me with thy pow'rful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me now and evermore,
Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain where the healing waters flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through,
Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer, shield me with your mighty arm,
Shield me with your mighty arm.

When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs and praises, songs and praises, I will raise forevermore,
I will raise forevermore.

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SERMON "Is the reason for our hunger a lack of food? Would hunger remain if there was an abundance of grace and compassion?"

HYMN

"Break Now the Bread of Life"

Green # 235

Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As once you broke the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page I seek thee Lord;
My spirit waits for thee, O living Word.

Bless your own truth, dear Lord, to me, to me.
As when you blest the bread by Galilee.
Then shall bondage cease, all fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace, my All in All!

Thou art the bread of life, O Lord, to me.
Thy holy Word the truth that rescues me.
Give me to eat and live with thee above;
Teach me to love thy truth, for you are love.

Oh, send thy Spirit, Lord, now unto me.
That he may touch my eyes and make me see.
Show me the truth concealed within thy Word,
And in thy book revealed I see my Lord.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, you draw us to you and welcome us, emptied of pride and hungry for grace, to this your kingdom feast. Nowhere can we find the food for which our souls cry out but here, Lord, at your table. Invigorate and nourish us that in and through this bread and wine, your love may meet us, and your life complete us with the power and glory of your kingdom. Amen

BENEDICTION & SENDING

As you go into the coming week, may you experience the abundance of God's marvelous love. May you come to know how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love for you really is. All glory to God, who is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or imagine!

We live, empowered by God's love.

Filled to the brim with the goodness of God, the nourishment of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we go in peace to serve God in all that we think, do, and say.

Amen! We go in Christ's name to love and serve!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

We are called to meditate on and give thanks for God's generous grace that sustains and unites us. In the wilderness, the Israelites are fed meat and manna. In the Gospel, the people remember this miracle and ask Jesus what he will do to show them that they should believe in him. His response is to offer himself as the Bread of Life that brings true sustenance. In the epistle, this same sustaining grace welcomes us into the united community of God and gives us each gifts that we are to use to build our community up.

The message is simple, but also very challenging. God's grace is sufficient, and God does seek to sustain and provide for us. But we have a part to play. As we commit to the unity of the community of faith so we each contribute our share from the gracious gifts God has given us – be it time, talents or treasures. When we do this, we all enjoy abundance and unity and the tremendous life and nourishment that flows as a result.

However, when we refuse to do this and make our own personal needs and desires paramount, our unity breaks down, and we all end up hurting and in need. This is not a magical, “reward and punishment” view of faith or of the world. It is the simple reality that the Bread of Life has given enough for all in the world, as long as we share what we have. When we hoard and take more than we need, we create lack and hunger, and our relationships inevitably break down.

The unfortunate temptation of our current lifestyle is the call to fill our lives with more “stuff.” We are constantly bombarded with images of things we don't have – be it partners, food, objects, or lifestyles – and we are constantly encouraged to forget about others as we go after these “bright, shiny objects” of our desire. We are constantly being told that we will only find fulfilment when we own enough, eat enough, experience enough, or know enough. However, in the process, our relationships and communities die, and our hearts grow increasingly empty!

We all discover that, when our lusts and greeds are allowed free reign, we bring disaster on ourselves and others. But we also all know that there is another way – the way of the Bread of Life who gave himself to feed us, and who calls us to believe in him and his way. As we embrace the way of faith in God's Reign, we find the freedom that comes from simplicity, the unity that comes from collaboration, and the abundance that comes from simplicity and generosity. But, beneath it all lies the crucial questions: Do we believe in the way of the Kingdom enough, do we trust in Jesus as the Bread of Life enough, that we will risk living according to his way, and commit ourselves to seek the unity that can only come when we share whatever gifts we have with others.

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