

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE SPIRIT BECKONS
POLKA FESTIVAL SUNDAY

Reverend John R. Hanson
July 25, 2021, 8:00, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Julie Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION *The Gospel readings move from Mark to John Chapter 6, for the question of faith becomes the focus with Jesus in feeding the crowds and appearing to the disciples in the storm. The challenge raised this week is: What will be the driving force of our lives – faithful trust in God's ways or our own self-interest? It sounds like an easy choice to make, but the realities of our daily lives show how hard it can be. May we find that our faith is able to give us the strength and courage to trust the way of God's Reign in our lives this week.*

THEME AND VERSE

The foolish say, 'there is no God.' We come, trusting in Jesus, the face, the voice, the presence of the God who loves us. The scoffers of our age ask, 'why do you seek after God?' We come because God's grace has spilled over in our lives. The hopeless around us think, 'no one cares about me.' We come because Jesus has found us and brought us home.

Jesus said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

HYMN

"Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel"

Green # 34

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, blest Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Oh, come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high and close the path to misery.

CCLI Song # 31982 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

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. Here, two signs are performed, revealing God's creating power.*

¹Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they

saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover,

the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley

loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time. **God is good!**

HYMN

"Joy to the World"

Green # 39

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

CCLI Song # 24016 CCLI License # 1713417

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

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

Let us deal honestly with God, our God, who comes to be with us.

Lord, again and again you promise to provide. You do provide, again and again, in our lives. Still we hoard the abundance through our own means and do not trust you with our first fruits. We want enough to have leftovers, but then our leftovers are not good enough, so they become what is offered to you. We quantify what we can and cannot do with our knowledge of what we do and do not have. We use fear to make our decisions, fooling ourselves about what is possible. Forgive us, Lord. Please, save us.

It is for the glory of God that we should know the love of Christ, that Jesus himself, the Son of God, is given up for our sake for the forgiveness of our sins. Our sins are forgiven. And according to the riches of our heavenly Father's glory, we may be strengthened in our inner being with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is Christ who may dwell in our hearts, and we may be rooted and grounded in love and faith.

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

SERVICE of HOLY BAPTISM (10:30)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON "It's Sunday! Let's Celebrate!!"

HYMN *"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"* Green # 479

My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,
Oh, let me from this day be wholly thine!

While life's dark maze I tread and griefs around me spread, be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray from thee aside.

When ends life's passing dream, when death's cold threatening stream
Shall o'er me roll; blest Savior, then, in love rear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!

CCLI Song # 43334 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord God, most of the time we are afraid. Afraid we don't or won't have enough to share. Afraid there are storms on the horizon which block us from our goals. Afraid that we need someone or something else to fill the emptiness in our lives. Yet you take what is available and make it more. Help us, Lord, to be generous, trusting, and satisfied in each encounter and in every day. Amen.

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.

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,

what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

Green # 561

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies:

Christ, our Lord, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above; for all gentle thoughts and mild:

For yourself, best gift divine to the world so freely giv’n;
For that great great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav’n:

CCLI Song # 43200 CCLI License # 1713417

SERMON

HYMN

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Burgundy # 283

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed thy hand hath provided;

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!

CCLI Song # 18723 CCLI License # 1713417

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, you meet us here at the crossroads of our life. Your healing takes place in your time, in our place, in ways that we could not imagine. May this meal, which feeds us in this time, strengthen us in our faith so that we may go from here, empowered, healed, and forgiven, ready to share your love and mercy to all of your people. 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.

May God be your strength; may Christ Jesus release you from all that limits you; and may the Holy Spirit give you freedom to experience the abundance of God's gifts in you.

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

Scripture portions are reprinted from Words for Worship, copyright 2017 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. Scripture quotations from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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.

This week's readings offer us the familiar stories of God's provision. In the related Old Testament passage, Elijah feeds a crowd with small rations, and in the Gospel reading from John, Jesus does the same with a much larger crowd – possibly because the generosity and faith of one small boy led to greater sharing and mutual care from the entire group. Furthermore, as the disciples wrestle in the storm, their fear is removed when they know the presence of Jesus, and they immediately find their way back to land safely. In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminds the believers of God's provision and grace, and prays that they may learn to grasp how abundant God's love is, and that they allow this knowledge to strengthen them and open them to God's life within them.

The focus, then, of the readings this week, is on learning to trust in God's grace and God's ways and learning to live out of that faith in every choice, every decision and every moment. It's a timely word, since so much suffering is caused when we operate from fear, lust, greed and self-sufficiency. Faith in God's ways and God's gracious presence may sound naive and impractical, but, when we take the risk and live as faithful followers of Christ, we discover that the principles of God's Reign really are the best way to live.

In every life a choice must be made in which we decide the principles that will guide us. In our relationships, our neighborhoods, our communities, our work and play we can choose to allow our own self-interest to be primary or we can trust that following the ways of God's Reign truly do lead us to life. The challenge is that we would love to believe that following Jesus guarantees prosperity, health and safety, but this is not what this week's readings promise. Rather, we are offered a vision of God's grace and presence that calls to the grace and compassion within us.

One of the tragedies of the contemporary church is that we have failed to live the faith we proclaim. Where it has spoken about forgiveness and grace, it has been vindictive and condemning. Where it has spoken about trust and generosity, it has been greedy and stingy. Where it has spoken about courage and integrity, it has been fearful and cowardly. If the world is to believe the church's message, we are going to have to live it in our lives and communities, and when we do, we may well discover that we contribute to wholeness and peace in our world.

John van de Laar at sacredise.com