



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso, IN 46385

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**Time after Pentecost
August 4, 2024**

We welcome you to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

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.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

*Prelude & Fugue in C Major
(from Eight Little Preludes & Fugues)*

J.S. Bach

WELCOME

If you are a guest with us, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

GREETING

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

*Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!*

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

Congregation:

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -

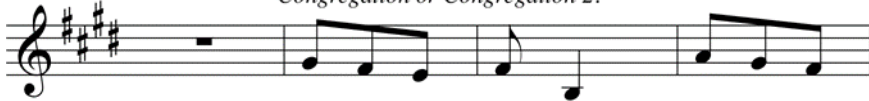
Verse 1

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once
slain, whose blood has freed and u -
nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of
God.

to Refrain

Verse 2

Congregation or Congregation 2:



2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and



might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ



for ev - er.

Verse 3

Congregation:



3. For God has come to dwell with us, to



make us peo - ple of God; to make



all things new.

the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

⁷Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; ⁸I gave you your master’s house, and your master’s wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. ⁹Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. ¹¹Thus says the LORD: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. ¹²For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” ^{13a}David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF CONFESSION 51:1-12

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

³For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother’s womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

READING: Ephesians 4:1-16

Christians share fundamental unity and diversity. Our unity consists in the one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Our diversity is expressed in various forms of ministry whose goal is equipping the saints and building up Christ's one body.

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷But 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.”

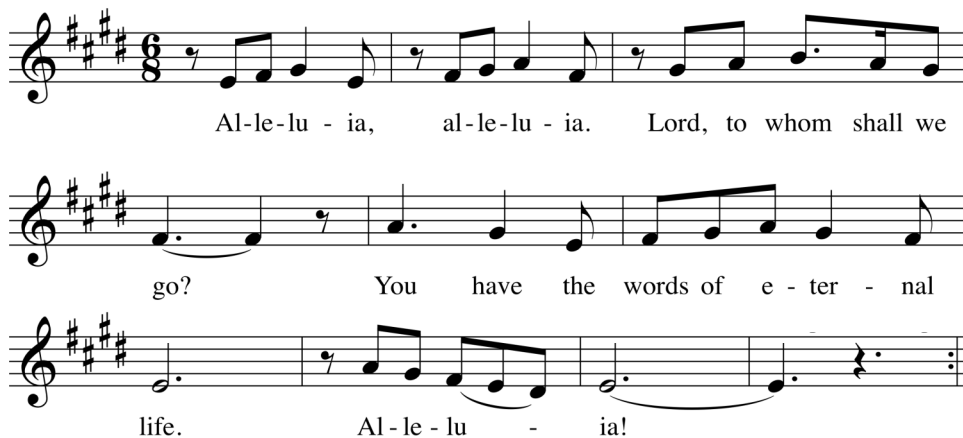
⁹(When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until 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. ¹⁴We 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. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

HOLY GOSPEL: John 6:24-35

Many of the five thousand people Jesus fed in the wilderness continued to follow him throughout the countryside. Jesus challenges them to consider the real nature of their quest.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁴When 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.

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶Jesus 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. ²⁷Do 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.” ²⁸Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” ²⁹Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ³⁰So 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?” ³¹Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³²Then 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. ³³For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵Jesus 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW # 647 *Glorious Things of You are Spoken*

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.



1 Glo - rious things of you are spo - ken, Zi - on, cit - y
2 See, the streams of liv - ing wa - ters, spring - ing from e -
3 Round each hab - i - ta - tion hov - 'ring, see the cloud and
4 Sav - ior, since of Zi - on's cit - y I through grace a



of our God! He whose word can - not be bro - ken
ter - nal love, well sup - ply your sons and daugh - ters,
fire ap - pear for a glo - ry and a cov - 'ring,
mem - ber am, let the world de - ride or pit - y,



formed you for his own a - bode. On the Rock of A - ges
and all fear of want re - move. Who can faint, while such a
show - ing that the Lord is near. Thus de - riv - ing from their
I will glo - ry in your name. Fad - ing are the world's vain



found - ed, what can shake your sure re - pose? With sal -
riv - er ev - er will their thirst as - suage? Grace which,
ban - ner light by night and shade by day, safe they
plea - sures, all their boast - ed pomp and show; sol - id



va - tion's walls sur - round - ed, you may smile at all your foes.
like the Lord, the giv - er, nev - er fails from age to age.
feed up - on the man - na which God gives them on their way.
joys and last - ing trea - sures none but Zi - on's chil - dren know.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.

Music: BLAENWERN, William P. Rowlands, 1860–1937

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.

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Calling on the spirit of Wisdom to guide our hearts and our minds, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

O Wise One, your wisdom has been present in this world since its beginning. Pour out your wisdom into the hearts of the whole church, especially the newly baptized, lay leaders, deacons, pastors, and bishops. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Holy God of all creation, you are the source of all life. Where the sun blazes hard and strong, bring a gentle breeze. In the places experiencing the cold of winter, bring your warmth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Compassionate God, help government leaders of this world unite for peace and justice. Humble all who hold authority, that power is directed toward a more just society. In Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea, grant reconciliation, protect refugees, and empower all who work for the common good. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of Justice, guide our United States. Help us to treat one another as neighbors and resist temptations to hostility and hate. Open our hearts to listen to one another. Give your spirit to those in leadership positions, to guide us toward healing, hope, and wisdom. Shape us to be a nation that cares for its people, that works for peace, and follows the paths that reflect your loving will. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Bread of life from heaven, you feed us. Fill all who hunger with needed nutrition and open our hearts to eliminate hunger in this world. May we see a day when all are fed. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

O Wisdom of truth, help us to understand your will for the church. Be with congregations experiencing transition, redevelopment, and the exciting yet frightening path of newness. May your wisdom be found at every step. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Redeeming God, we give you thanks for the lives and witness of your saints now departed, especially Dominic and Lawrence. Bring your beloved into eternal glory, opening wide the gates to the heavenly banquet. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We lift up these prayers to you, gracious God. Receive them into your holy keeping. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshiping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **ELCA's Global Missions' Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania, Africa and AMOS, "A Mission of Service" in Guatemala/Honduras.***

*If you wish to give electronically, use the **QR** code or browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).*



OFFERTORY

Fugue in A Minor

Pachelbel

OFFERING SONG

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Refrain

Congregation:

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread;
so may all your peo-ple from all the ends of earth be
gath-ered in - to one in you.

Verses

1. As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst
2. Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when
to Refrain
may we share the pres-ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Presider: *Congregation:*

The Lord be with you. And al-so with you.

Presider: *Congregation:*

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Presider: *Congregation:*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is

right to give God thanks and praise.

It is our duty and delight ...and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS


Congregation:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and

might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is the One.")



Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high-est!

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as 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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Come!
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

The assembly is seated. The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:

The body of Christ, given for you.

Amen (*receive the bread*)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen (*receive the cup*)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; wine is received either by Common Cup or from individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

LAMB OF GOD



1. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
2. Lamb of God, you break the chains of ha - tred and fear;
3. Lamb of God, you are the way of jus - tice and peace:
4. Lamb of God, you are the way of mer - cy and love:



have mer-cy on us, mer-cy on us, mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



grant us peace, grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #474 *Bread of Life from Heaven*

Refrain



Bread of life from heav-en, your blood and bod - y giv - en, we



eat this bread and drink this cup un - til you come a - gain.



- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-----|------|-------|------|------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Break | now | the | bread | of | Christ's | sac - ri - fice; | giv - ing |
| 2 | Seek | not | the | food | that | will | pass a - way; | set your |
| 3 | Love | as | the | one | who, | in | love | for you, |
| 4 | Dwell | in | the | one | who | now | dwells | in you; |
| 5 | Drink | of | this | cup | and | de - clare | his | death; |
| | | | | | | | | eat this |



thanks,	hun - gry	ones,	gath - er	round.	Eat,	all	of	you,	and	be
hearts	on	the	food	that	en - dures.	Come,	learn	the	true	and
self	for	the	life	of	the	world.	Come	to	the	one
home	in	the	life - giv - ing	Word.	Know	on - ly	Christ,	Ho - ly		
bread	and	be - lieve	Eas - ter	morn;	trust	his	re - turn	and,	with	



sat - is - fied;	in	Christ's	pres - ence	the	loaves	will	a - bound.
liv - ing	way,	that	the	full - ness	of	life	may
food	for	you,	that	your	hun - ger	and	thirst
One	of	God,	and	be - lieve	in	the	truth
ev - 'ry	breath,	praise	the	one	in	whom	you
							are
							re - born.

Refrain

ELW #487 *What Feast of Love*



- 1 What feast of love is of - fered here, what ban-quet come from heav - en?
- 2 What light of truth is of - fered here, what cov - e - nant from heav - en?
- 3 What wine of love is of - fered here, what crim-son drink from heav - en?



What food of ev - er - last-ing life, what gra - cious gift is giv - en?
What hope of ev - er - last-ing life, what won-drous word is giv - en?
What stream of ev - er - last-ing life, what pre - cious blood is giv - en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav - en.
This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav - en.
This, this is Christ the king, the sweet - est wine of heav - en.



Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man - na giv - en!
Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv - en!
Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!

When all have returned to their places, the assembly stands.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

THANKS BE TO YOU



1. Praise to you, O God of mer - cy:
2. From of old you loved and sought us:

Thanks be to you for ev - er! Rais - ing high the
Thanks be to you for ev - er! Truth and jus - tice

weak and low - ly: Thanks be to you for ev - er!
you have taught us: Thanks be to you for ev - er!

Strong is your faith - ful - ness, strong is your
love, re - mem - b'ring your cov - e - nant of
life with us. 3. Praise to you, O
God of mer - cy: Thanks be to you for ev - er!

Rais - ing high the weak and low - ly: Thanks be to you for
ev - er! Thanks be to you for ev - er!

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #618 *Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer*



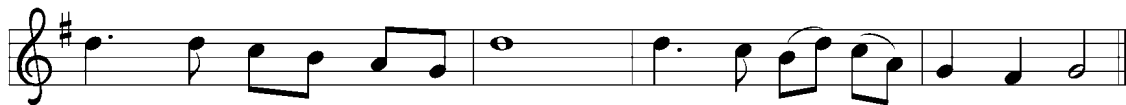
1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me
wa - ters flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
fears sub - side; death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es



feed me now and ev - er - more, feed me now and ev - er - more.
shield me with your might - y arm, shield me with your might - y arm.
I will raise for - ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

Thanks be to God!

We are invited to a time of fellowship in the Gathering Area; please honor those who wish to listen to the Postlude by taking your conversations outside the Sanctuary.

POSTLUDE

Guide Me, Ever Great Redeemer

Manz

Stewardship Snippet

John 6:35 – 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."

In the Lord's Prayer we ask God to "Give us today our daily bread." Jesus reminds us that he is the true bread that feeds our lives and souls. Daily we partake of Jesus through prayer and Scripture, and as often as we may through Holy Communion.

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte		Joey Rodeck
Lector	Reagan Jackson	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Lanie Steinwart	
Communion Assistants	Betty Lockett Bob Lockett	Phil Hahn
Ushers	Irene Adams Luke Venstrom	
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	
Video/Livestream	-----	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Special Music	Brett Furuness & Phil Hahn, vocal duet	
Communion Baker	Lois Felten	
Communion Table	Barb Clements Terry Albrecht Helen Arvidson	Diana Ahlbrand Marilyn McGawn Marla Niksch Lori Schwartz

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of August 4, 2024

August 8

Dominic, founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), died 1221

Dominic was a Spanish priest who preached against the Albigensians, a heretical sect that held gnostic and dualistic beliefs. Dominic believed that a stumbling block to restoring heretics to the church was the wealth of clergy, so he formed an itinerant religious order, the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), who lived in poverty, studied philosophy and theology, and preached against heresy. The method of this order was to use kindness and gentle argument, rather than harsh judgment, to bring unorthodox Christians back to the fold. Dominic was opposed to burning Christians at the stake. Three times Dominic was offered the office of bishop, which he refused so that he could continue in his work of preaching.

August 10

Lawrence, deacon, martyr, died 258

Lawrence was one of seven deacons of the congregation at Rome and, like the deacons appointed in Acts, was responsible for financial matters in the church and for the care of the poor. Lawrence lived during a time of persecution under the emperor Valerian. The emperor demanded that Lawrence surrender the treasures of the church. Lawrence gathered lepers, orphans, the blind and lame. He brought them to the emperor and said, "Here is the treasure of the church." This act enraged the emperor, and Lawrence was sentenced to death. Lawrence's martyrdom was one of the first to be observed by the church.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea.

We are **thankful** for:

- the natural resources and diverse gifts that come from these countries, such as the distinctive music and dance of Cameroon
- those who minister to victims of sexual violence, trafficking and other human rights abuses
- Christians and people of other faiths who courageously have pursued reconciliation and peace among those in conflict
- individuals and organizations who have provided for health clinics and schools in Cameroon and the Central African Republic

We **pray** for:

- just resolutions to the conflicts and violence among diverse groups and their leaders
- refugees who flee to other countries, and for those who host them
- economic developments that make it possible for all to rise out of poverty
- stable democratic governments that effectively serve the common good

What Are You Longing For?

In a world filled with seemingly endless options and an overload of information, it can be hard to know what we really want, and even harder to know what we actually need. As a society we are perhaps more mobile and more connected than ever. For those with a certain level of privilege, opportunities abound for careers, for education, for travel. Many of us own more stuff than we can reasonably use or even store in our homes. And yet, our collective mental health and overall well-being might be worse than ever. What are we missing? In a society of excess, what needs are going unfulfilled? What are we still longing for?

The crowds didn't seem to know what they were longing for either. They came to Jesus seeking more loaves of bread (a fair request!) but missed their deeper need: spiritual nourishment. They asked for the thing that could satisfy their hunger pangs, but almost missed out on the food that could transform not only their lives but the whole world. They almost settled for the "food that perishes" when they were being offered the Bread of life.

Jesus recognizes our hunger and offers himself as the ultimate nourishment for our deepest needs. Jesus is not fooled by our distractedness, our quick fixes, our tendency to gravitate toward things that will never truly satisfy. He seeks us out, offering his body for our sake— our ultimate sustenance, giving us all we need for the journey ahead.

The distractions in our world are many, so we need to be reoriented regularly to Christ's gift for us. We celebrate this gift each time we gather at the communion table to receive Christ himself: bread that fulfills our deepest longings for relationship with God and one another. Nourished with this gift of life, we, too, are sent forth as bread for a world in need.

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