



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso, IN 46385

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**Time after Pentecost
July 28, 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 on 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.

Today is the first of five 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.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Fugue in G

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).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,
help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from the ways
of the world in which we live.**

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:

in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:
you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

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:

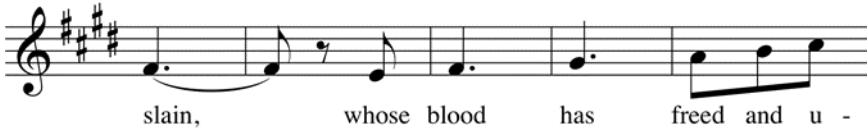
Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

The musical score is written on five staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Verse 1



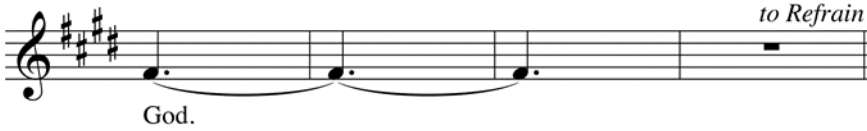
1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once



slain, whose blood has freed and u -



nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of

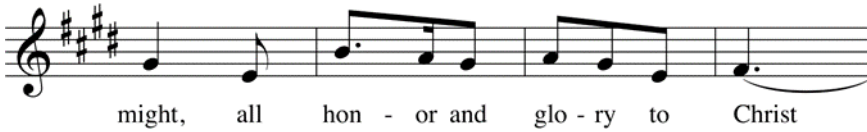


to Refrain
God.

Verse 2



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



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



to Refrain
for ev - er.

Verse 3



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



make us peo - ple of God; to make



to Refrain
all things new.

⁶So David sent word to Joab, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the people fared, and how the war was going. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house, and wash your feet.” Uriah went out of the king’s house, and there followed him a present from the king. ⁹But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰When they told David, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “You have just come from a journey. Why did you not go down to your house?” ¹¹Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing.” ¹²Then David said to Uriah, “Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. On the next day, ¹³David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

¹⁴In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵In the letter he wrote, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 14

¹Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, every deed is vile; there is no one who does any good.

²**The LORD looks down from heaven upon us all,
to see if there is anyone who is wise, who seeks after God.**

³They have all proved faithless; all alike have turned bad;
there is none who does good; no, not one.

⁴**Have they no knowledge, all those ¹ evildoers
who eat up my people like bread and do not call upon the LORD?**

⁵See how they tremble with fear,
because God is in the company of the righteous.

⁶**Your aim is to confound the plans of the afflicted,
but the LORD is their refuge.**

⁷Oh, that Israel’s deliverance would come out of Zion!

When the LORD restores the fortunes of the people, Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad.

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.

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 6:1-21

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.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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 #461 *All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly*

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



1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad - ly; ho - ly man - na is our bread.
2 All who hun-ger, nev - er strang - ers; seek - er, be a wel - come guest.
3 All who hun-ger, sing to - geth - er, Je - sus Christ is liv - ing bread.



Come from wil - der - ness and wan - d'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.
Come from rest - less - ness and roam - ing. Here in joy we keep the feast.
Come from lone - li - ness and long - ing. Here in peace we have been fed.



You that yearn for days of full - ness, all a - round us is our food.
We that once were lost and scat - tered in com - mu - nion's love have stood.
Blest are those who from this ta - ble live their days in grat - i - tude.



Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.
Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.
Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825

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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

Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations—further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.

One in the communion of saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices in prayer.

A brief silence.

God of generations, you work in us far more than we can ask or imagine. Bless the church you have called into being across time and space, and fill it with the power of the Spirit for loving service. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of field and forest, streams and seas, you are the fullness of all things. As grains of wheat grow upon the earth and fish swim in the waters, sustain your creation. Protect harvests and give every person food in due season. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God beyond borders, you rule all in all. Bless the work of humanitarians and peacekeepers, shield those who live, work, or serve in harm's way, and bring an end to war and conflict. Bless the lands, people, and churches of the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God who calls nations and kings to account, 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. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of healing, you open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. We remember any who are sick or suffering, families in our community who endure hunger, those who seek asylum or citizenship, and our beloved for whom death is near. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of grace, you root us and ground us in love. As you inspired our ancestors in this place in their ministry, sustain us also in new endeavors, that your glory may be made known, and your lovingkindness shared anew. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all, your love in Christ surpasses all knowledge. We give thanks for the departed who have come to know the fullness of your grace. Join our voices with theirs - with Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Schütz, and George Frederick Handel, with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, with Olaf and all the saints in singing your praises. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Holy God, holy and merciful: into your outstretched arms we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping 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

With High Delight Let Us Unite

Culli

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

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

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!

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 #515 *Break Now the Bread of Life*

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines.

1 Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, as once you
 2 Bless your own word of truth, dear Lord, to me, as when you
 3 You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, your ho - ly

broke the loaves be - side the sea. Be - yond the sa - cred page
 blessed the bread by Gal - i - lee. Then shall all bond-age cease,
 word the truth that res - cues me. Give me to eat and live

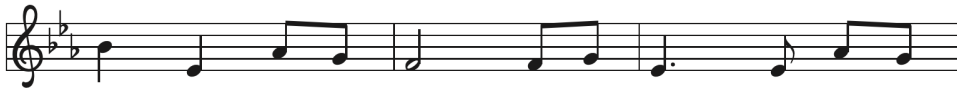
I seek you, Lord; my spir - it waits for you, O liv - ing Word.
 all fet - ters fall; and I shall find my peace, my All - in - All!
 with you a - bove; teach me to love your truth, for you are love.

Text: Mary A. Lathbury, 1841–1913, alt.
 Music: BREAD OF LIFE, William F. Sherwin, 1826–1888

ACS #966 *Loaves Were Broken, Words Were Spoken*



1 Loaves were bro - ken, words were spo - ken by the
 2 Loaves were bro - ken, words were spo - ken in a
 3 Loaves are bro - ken, words are spo - ken, as in
 4 By the loaves you break and give us, send us



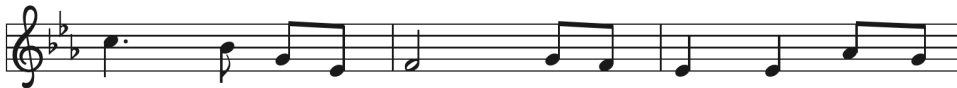
Gal - i - le - an shore. Je - sus, Bread of life from
 qui - et room one night. In the bread and wine you
 faith we gath - er here. Je - sus speaks a - cross the
 in your name to share bread for which the mil - lions



heav - en, was their food for - ev - er - more.
 gave them, Christ, you came as Light from Light.
 a - ges: "I am with you; do not fear!"
 hun - ger, words that tell your love and care.



By your bod - y bro - ken for us, by your



wine of life out - poured, Je - sus, feed a - gain your



peo - ple. Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., 1923–2007
 Music: JOYOUS LIGHT, Marty Haugen, b. 1950
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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!

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 #689 *Praise and Thanksgiving*



1 Praise and thanks-giv - ing, God, we would of - fer for all things
2 God, bless the la - bor we bring to serve you, that with our
3 Fa - ther, pro - vid - ing food for your chil - dren, by Wis - dom's
4 Then will your bless - ing reach ev - 'ry peo - ple, free - ly con -



liv - ing, you have made good: har - vest of sown fields, fruits of the
neigh - bor we may be fed. Sow - ing or till - ing, we would work
guid - ing teach us to share one with an - oth - er, so that, re -
fess - ing your gra - cious hand. Where you are reign - ing, no one will



or - chard, hay from the mown fields, blos - som and wood.
with you, har - vest - ing, mill - ing for dai - ly bread.
joic - ing with us, all oth - ers may know your care.
hun - ger; your love sus - tain - ing show - ers the land.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984, alt.

Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune

Text © Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Sam Venstrom	Danelle Rivera
Lector	John Buggeln	Doug Schmidt
Prayer Assistant	Darla Hernandez	Karen Hernes
Communion Assistants	Phyllis Schroeder Linda Mapes	Jacque Chevalier Erin Crill
Ushers	Tim Sutherland Reagan Jackson Ruthie Ridley	
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Ben Crill
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Communion Baker	Marilyn McGawn	
Communion Table	Barb Clements Terry Albrecht Helen Arvidson	Diana Ahlbrand Marilyn McGawn Marla Niksch Lori Schwartz

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of July 28, 2024

July 28

Johann Sebastian Bach, died 1750; Heinrich Schütz, died 1672; George Frederick Handel, died 1759; musicians

These three German-born musicians have done much to enrich the life of the church. Schütz was an early master who focused on settings of biblical texts. Bach wrote over 300 cantatas along with works for organ and instrumental pieces, and has been called the “fifth evangelist” for the way he proclaimed the gospel in music. Handel’s great work, Messiah, is a setting of scriptural texts.

July 29

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany

Friends of Jesus, Mary and Martha are remembered for the hospitality of their home that they offered him—Martha focused on serving their guest, and Mary on listening to him. Their brother Lazarus was raised from the dead as a sign of the greater resurrection to come.

July 29

Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, died 1030

Considered the patron saint of Norway, Olaf went from a life of piracy to becoming Christian and declaring himself king of Norway. He revised the laws and tried to administer them fairly. Driven from Norway in a rebellion, he was killed in battle trying to regain his kingdom.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe.**

We are **thankful** for:

- wildlife and rainforests in these lands, and those who protect this habitat
- the oral traditions, folklore, and good practices that have been preserved
- rich minerals and economic development, although benefits need to be shared more fairly
- healing from exploitative practices that began under colonial rule

We **pray** for:

- democratic fair elections and political stability in this region
- economic development that benefits all the people, especially those living in poverty
- preservation of the wildlife and the land
- the witness of the churches and other faith groups in the midst of the challenges

Will There Be Enough?

“Will there be enough?” This is perhaps a question as old as humanity itself. Will there be enough money? Enough food? Enough time? It’s a question that threatens to consume our faith communities. Will there be enough volunteers? Enough preachers? Enough money in the offering plate? Enough people in the pews? Will there be enough donations or energy or creativity to carry us through?

We aren’t alone in these fears. The disciples asked the same of Jesus. “Will there be enough to eat?” Surely, a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish could never feed this crowd. Better to send the people away to fend for themselves.

Perhaps like the disciples, we tend to panic and turn inward when resources start to dwindle. And yet, again and again, God calls us together, taking our fears and transforming them into gifts of abundance. A few crumbs become a feast. A hungry crowd becomes a community bearing witness to God’s grace.

This story is an antidote to our anxious times, when we are tempted to cling, to hoard, to squander away resources for an uncertain future. Miraculous things happen when we open our fists and trust that with God, all things are possible.

This is not an easy mindset to hold, so together, we practice! We practice a theology of “enoughness” each week when we share communion with one another. We witness the tremendous power of a little bread and a little wine to sustain us on our journey. We practice generosity when we pass the offering plate, turning our meager offerings into a gift for the greater good. We witness how the gifts and talents of a community come together to create something that on our own would never have been possible. Because, in Christ, there is always more than enough.

Stewardship Snippet

Psalm 145:15, 16 – The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

Our God is a god of abundance. As steward/disciples we look to God for all that we need, knowing that God provides.

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Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.