**Pentecost 11- august 8, 2021**

**zion, philipsburg, st. peter’s, linwood**

Welcome to worship on this 11th Sunday of Pentecost, August 8, 2021. I am Leanne Darlington, pastor at Zion, Philipsburg, and Interim Pastor at St. Peter’s Linwood. I am back from holidays…they always seem to go to fast. We spent some time at a friend’s cottage and even though the weather was not the greatest we were able to get out on some walks, do some kayaking and enjoy all that cottage life has to offer.

Church Council will meet on Tuesday night at Zion, church reopening will be discussed and planned.

Coffee hour resumes at 11:00 today, please join us if you are able. Please remember that even though the doors of Zion remain closed, there are still monthly expenses that need to be met. If you have not donated lately, please consider doing so. Thank you to all who continue to support and pray for our congregation.

Let us take a moment to prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**GREETING (ELW p. 213)**

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.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 215)**

Let us pray.

Gracious God, your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he may live in us and we in him, and that, strengthened by this food, we may live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind* (ELW 400)**

1 God of tempest, God of whirlwind,
as on Pentecost descend!
Drive us out from sheltered comfort;
past these walls your people send!
Sweep us into costly service,
there with Christ to bear the cross,
there with Christ to bear the cross!

2 God of blazing, God of burning,
all that blocks your purpose, purge!
Through your church, Christ's living Body,
let your flaming Spirit surge!
Where deceit conceals injustice,
kindle us to speak your truth,
kindle us to speak your truth!
3 God of earthquake, God of thunder,
shake us loose from lethargy!
Break the chains of sin asunder,
for earth's healing set us free!
Crumble walls that still divide us;
make us one in Christ our Lord,
make us one in Christ our Lord!

4 God of passion, God unsleeping,
stir in us love's restlessness!
Where the people cry in anguish,
may we share your heart's distress.
Rouse us from content with evil;
claim us for your kingdom's work,
claim us for your kingdom's work!

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: 1 Kings 19:4-8**

A reading from 1 Kings.

4[Elijah] went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.”5Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, “Get up and eat.” 6He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. 7The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, “Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.” 8He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 34:1-8**

 1I will bless the Lord at all times; the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.
 2**I will glory | in the Lord;** **let the lowly hear | and rejoice.**
 3Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; let us exalt God’s name together.
 4**I sought the Lord, who answered me** **and delivered me from all my terrors.**
 5Look upon the Lord and be radiant, and let not your faces be ashamed.
 6**I called in my affliction, and the Lord heard me** **and saved me from all my troubles.**
 7The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear the Lord and delivers them.
 8**Taste and see that the Lord is good;** **happy are they who take refuge in God!**

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 4:25--5:2**

A reading from Ephesians.

25So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. 26Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27and do not make room for the devil. 28Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. 29Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. 31Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, 32and be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. 5:1Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: John 6:35-51**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

35Jesus said to [the crowd,] “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; 38for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 39And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

41Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” 43Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves. 44No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. 45It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48I am the bread of life. 49Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON (ELW p. 217)**

 Our 5-week theme of Jesus as the bread of life, as the key to abundant life, continues in the gospel of John this week. When Jesus speaks to his statement as being the bread of life, he is not just using it as a simple figure of speech. Jesus as the bread of life is a revelation of Jesus’ identity, of who he is and what abundant life necessitates.

 Back in antiquity, bread was a staple of daily living and provision, unlike our low-carb, gluten free world of today. Jesus was calling the people to live in the abundant life he provided just as they relied on bread to fill their empty stomachs, to put their trust in him, to believe in him. Jesus was calling the people of antiquity to be in relationship with him, to be in relationship with God that was possible through him, as the bread of life. Karoline Lewis suggests that “to believe in Jesus is to make the connection that he is both the bread that God provides that gives life and also the source of the bread.”[[1]](#footnote-1)  This is relationship. This is the love of God shown for God’s people throughout history.

 Now, if you think this is a bit heady and confusing, I will not argue with you. In fact, the religious authorities of the time were confused as well. They could not understand why Jesus was calling himself the bread of life. They could not understand why he was saying he came down from heaven. They knew his parents Mary and Joseph. They watched him grow up and they watched him play with his brothers and sisters. I’m sure some of them grew up across the field from Jesus. So, I get their thinking in wondering how could this guy who had human flesh and bones just up and say that he came down from heaven? This was the radical nature of Jesus. This was the radical love of God coming to the people to show the way, the truth, and abundant life.

 The religious authorities would have understood God providing for folks. In the Exodus, God sustained the believing Israelites, in providing manna for their 40-year journey in the wilderness. God provided by giving them what they needed to survive…never too much and never too little, so that all had enough. In our First Testament reading from 1 Kings, God provides for the prophet Elijah when he had seemingly given up hope. God sent an angel who brought food and water to give Elijah the strength to finish his journey. God did not abandon the Israelites, God did not give up on Elijah, and God does not give up on us. That is relationship, that is trust, that is faith, and that is love.

 In our second reading from the book of Ephesians, the writer Paul speaks of our relationship with God through the waters of our baptism and the truth found in Jesus Christ, the bread of life. The passage does not simply contain badges of merit that we earn like that of the boy scouts. It incorporates practical suggestions for living the new life found in Jesus Christ. Look at verse 26….Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. I always wondered where the quote “do not go to bed angry at one another” came from, now I know! But I wonder if there is more to this. Paul is not saying that we should not be angry; remember we are perfectly imperfect folks who experience emotion in our daily lives, and this includes anger. Paul advises the need to acknowledge our anger and to deal with it. It is not advantageous to let our anger simmer away unnoticed (we all know what happens to an unwatched pot). After a time, our anger like the pot can boil over leaving us to take our emotions out on others and say things in the heat of the moment that we later regret. Unacknowledged anger tears relationships apart, leaving physical and emotional wounds that sometimes never heal.

 Paul calls upon us to live our lives with authenticity, sharing our time and provisions with everyone so that all have enough. How different would our world be if we cared more about our neighbour than our status or increasing our bank account? Can we change our view of success to not being the one with the most money or the most important job, but the one who gives freely and serves all in need? What would our churches, communities, and world look like?

 Verse 29 speaks of not letting evil come from our mouths. How much better off would we be if we thought before we spoke? And when we do speak, what if we did so with kindness, empathy, and grace? Would this not result in building one another up instead of breaking one another down.

 As baptized members of the body of Christ, we are given the opportunity to be a new creation, to focus on the ways of new life and to instill new life in others. As baptized members of the body of Christ, we are part of the body of Christ, we are a slice of the bread of life, and this gives us the strength we need to carry on in our lives. We have the strength and courage to deal with the confusing parts and to deal with the anger. We can encourage one another. We can learn from one another, and we can forgive as we have been forgiven. The passage reminds us that we are called to not grieve the Holy Spirit. To be baptized, to be Christian is to be in relationship with the living and living God in Jesus Christ, who is the bread of life. The nature of love is to love, to love God and love one another through the power of the Holy Spirit.

 When we chose the abundant life that God provides through Jesus Christ, we are set free to live a new and distinct way of life. We are drawn into the heart of God and set apart to make a difference in the world. We are called to live in relationship and community with one another, to give thanks for the eternal life that only God can provide. May we live into our baptismal promises. May we live into the abundant life that only God can provide, knowing that the bread of life feeds us and is God’s presence in the world. May it sustain us, may it enliven us. Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY*O Living Bread from Heaven* (ELW 542)**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thYZuq795Bw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thYZuq795Bw)

1 O living Bread from heaven,
how well you feed your guest!
The gifts that you have given
have filled my heart with rest.
O wondrous food of blessing!
O cup that heals our woes!
My heart, this gift possessing,
in thankful song o'er flows.

2 My Savior, you have led me
within your holiest place,
and here yourself have fed me
with treasures of your grace;
for you have freely given
what earth could never buy,
the bread of life from heaven,
that now I shall not die.

3 You gave me all I wanted;
this food can death destroy.
And you have freely granted
the cup of endless joy.
My Lord, I do not merit
the favor you have shown;
and all my soul and spirit
bow down before your throne.

4 Oh, grant me then, well-strengthened
with heav'nly food, while here
my course on earth is lengthened,
to serve you, free from fear;
and bring me home to praise you
where none can peace destroy,
where I will ever raise you
glad songs in endless joy.

**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.*

For the church of Christ in all its diverse forms. For mission developers, new mission starts, and all communities of faith exploring new models of ministry for the sake of the gospel. For congregations facing difficult decisions about their future. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the health and well-being of creation. For shade trees that provide refuge from the hot summer sun. For lakes, rivers, and oceans contaminated by pollution and all who lack clean water. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those called to positions of authority in our legal system, we pray. For judges, lawyers, law clerks, and court employees who ensure the fair administration of justice. For corrections officers and prison chaplains, that they would deal mercifully with those who are incarcerated. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who cry out to you in their affliction. For exiles, refugees, and others who face long and difficult journeys, uncertain about the future. For all who mourn the death of a loved one. For all who are sick and injured *especially* Eddy, Elaine, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Bonnie, Mary, Tilly, Robert, Helen, Vivian, Katie, Rhonda, Deb, Nicole, Esther, Phyllis, the lives and memory of the buried children at residential school sites across Canada, and those we name in the silence of our hearts. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who have been raised to eternal life, we give thanks. With all the saints we praise you for the bread of life that keeps us in your love forever. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

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.**

**PEACE (ELW p. 217)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD (ELW p. 220)**

Let us pray.

Holy God, our Maker, our Healer, our Teacher,

your magnificent creation springs forth from your Word.

All that has life and breath praises your name.

For your Word that sustains the earth, **We thank you, O God.**

You sent us Jesus, your Word, to renew the world.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry,

preached your mercy, and called us to faith.

For your Word in our Lord Christ, **We praise you, O God.**

Nourish us with the Spirit of your Word,

that we may grow in grace, bearing the fruits of redemption,

and sharing your strength and beauty with all the world.

For your Word in our lives, **We entreat you, O God.**

Accept our thanksgiving and receive our prayer,

for the sake of your living Word, Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us 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.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING (ELW p. 221)**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 222)**

Go in peace. Be the body of Christ

**Thanks be to God.**

**SENDING SONG*Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises* (ELW 535)**

Refrain
Hallelujah! We sing your praises,
all our hearts are filled with gladness.
Hallelujah! We sing your praises,
all our hearts are filled with gladness. Repeat

1 Christ the Lord to us said:
I am wine, I am bread,
I am wine, I am bread,
give to all who thirst and hunger. Refrain

2 Now he sends us all out,
strong in faith, free of doubt,
strong in faith, free of doubt.
Tell to all the joyful gospel. Refrain

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1. Karoline M. Lewis, in *John: Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)