

Order of Worship for August 1, 2021 8:30 AM Updated

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Opening Hymn: “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus” – Hymn #821

Confession and Absolution: p. 151

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: With upright heart the LORD shepherded them

C: **and guided them with His skillful hand.**

P: He commanded the skies above

C: **and opened the doors of heaven,**

P: and He rained down on them manna to eat

C: **and gave them the grain of heaven.**

P: Man ate of the bread of the angels;

C: **He sent them food in abundance.**

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: With upright heart He shepherded them

C: **and guided them with His skillful hand.**

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 152-3

Hymn of Praise (“This Is the Feast”) p. 155

Salutation p. 156

Prayer of the Day:

P: Merciful Father, You gave Your Son Jesus as the heavenly bread of life. Grant us faith to feast on Him in Your Word and Sacraments that we may be nourished unto life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 16:2–15

R: The whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because He has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against Him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your grumbling.’” And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 4:1–16

R: I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says,

“When He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.”

(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that He had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow

up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse: (p. 156)

Holy Gospel: John 6:22–35

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 6th chapter

C: Glory to You, O Lord (sung).

P: On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on Him God the Father has set His seal.” Then they said to Him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom God has sent.” So they said to Him, “Then what sign do You do, that we may see and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to Him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ (sung).

Sermon Hymn: “*All You Works of God*” - **Hymn #930**

Sermon: “*Works of God*” – **John 6:22–35**

When you think of the works of God, what do you think of? Do you think of creation, of how God made everything out of nothing? After this last year and a half, do you think of the plagues that came on people in judgment? Do you think of the miracles described throughout the Bible, done by prophets and disciples and Jesus?

In our society, there's a whole class of things described as acts of God. In insurance policies, those are natural events, not caused by human intervention, which could not have been predicted or prevented. That usually includes natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, or storms. Of course, that doesn't mean that the insurance company won't try as hard as possible to not pay out. They may even try to sue God to cover their losses, but they usually don't get very far.

In today's Gospel lesson, the people have seen a miraculous work of God. They've seen Jesus feed a huge crowd of over 5000 people using only five loaves and two fish, with baskets full of leftovers. The disciples saw Jesus do another miraculous work of God, walking on the water, calming the storm and getting their boat safely to shore. But now the crowd followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee. They want to see him do the work of God again.

The crowd is looking for Jesus, but only because of their hunger. They want Jesus to do the same work of God he did before, feeding them. They want Jesus to give them what they want, on their schedule. They want Jesus to be like the rulers they're used to having.

Rome was famous for its bread and circuses. In order to maintain power, the leaders made sure the people were fed and entertained, and then they were happy. Other rulers throughout the ancient world did the same thing, placating their subjects with free food. The practice continues today in many and various ways, with people demanding things for free, and the powers that be trying to keep the peace with entertainment and economic benefits.

The crowd looking for Jesus isn't looking for him to save them. They're looking for Jesus to do the work of God, providing them bread from heaven just as God did to the Israelites in the wilderness. But they miss the work of God that happened in the Exodus. The work of God wasn't providing food for them in the wilderness. God's work had been saving them from slavery in Egypt. God's work was leading them to the Promised Land. God's work was providing all that they had, not just the manna.

The crowd sees the bread God provided in the wilderness, and the bread Jesus gave them earlier, not as a sign of God's provision or care or love. They want God to provide what they want on their schedule. The people are focused on material things, not spiritual things. They see the miraculous signs Jesus does, the works of God he performs, but not the true meaning. They don't see how the miracles point to who Jesus is, and what Jesus is there to do.

We often do the same thing. We want God to provide a miracle, but on our timetable. We pray for rain to come on our schedule. We pray for the pandemic to miraculously come to an end immediately. We pray for a cure for chronic and terminal diseases. We want God to do a miracle for us, but we focus on asking only for our immediate physical needs.

But when we do that, we treat God like a vending machine. We treat God as our servant. We think that if we put enough prayers or promises in, Earning God's favor, earning material blessings from some sort of vending machine god, is impossible, and not the way the true God works.

And just as with snacks from a vending machine, we're often left unsatisfied. The snacks don't fill us as much as we think they will. They don't give us the energy we need, the nutrition we

need, the satisfaction we want. We're left going back again, hoping the next snack will satisfy. All the while, God wants to give us something more, something that will satisfy, something that will last.

The people don't just see works of God as the things that God does for them. They are also the works God requires. They want to know what they have to do for God to do His works for them. They want to treat God like a vending machine; put the right work in, get the right work out.

The work of God, the work that God requires, though, isn't anything like that. As Jesus tells them,

All we do is believe. All we have to do is believe. And that's not even our work. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is who points our faith to Christ, who makes sure that Christ is the object of our faith.

Jesus came to do the work of God. The work God required of Jesus was to perfectly keep the law, to remain sinless. The work of God was to go to the cross, and die for those who had failed to do the works God required, which is everyone. And from that miraculous work of God, we all get more than a meal. We get more than a temporary reprieve from hunger. We get eternal life.

That work of God comes out of love. It doesn't come because of any merit or worthiness on our part. It doesn't come because of the works we do. It comes freely.

Jesus tells the crowd not to work for food that perishes, but for food that lasts. We've had the chance to reexamine how we work over the last year and a half. Working from home, or at least remotely, has increased dramatically. Many have found the flexibility in such arrangements to be good and helpful. Others have discovered that being treated badly by customers in restaurants or retail stores isn't worth the low pay. Others have discovered new passions, new opportunities, new meaning in their lives. Those changes, though, haven't always brought people to finding the true meaning, the true happiness found in Jesus.

The works of God that Jesus did, the miracles, the signs, weren't done for their own purposes. They were not the goal in and of themselves. They were signs. They pointed to a greater reality. They pointed to who Jesus is; who God is.

We are surrounded by the works of God. Martin Luther once wrote,

[Most people] are so accustomed to [the works of God in nature]; they are as permeated with them as an old house is with smoke; they use them and wallow around in them like a sow in an oats sack. Oh, they say, is it so marvelous that the sun shines? That fire heats? That water contains fish? That hens lay eggs? That the earth yields grain? That a cow bears calves? That a woman gives birth to children? Why, this happens every day! ... [M]ust it be insignificant because it happens daily?

The works of God are not insignificant because they happen daily. The works of God provide for our physical needs, our daily bread. The works of God provide for our spiritual needs, calling us to repentance, giving us forgiveness. The works of God are miraculous and glorious. Look at Jesus and see them.

Nicene Creed:

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy;

C: hear our prayer.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface p.160

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You almighty God, heavenly Father for You sent Your Son Jesus into the world to be the Bread of Life, the true sources for all of us. As we feed on the food He gives us, You do Your work in us of producing faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name evermore praising You and singing . . .

Sanctus (*“Holy, Holy, Holy”*): p.161

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: Blessed are You Lord God, King of all creation, for Your works are great. You made us as the crown of Your creation, but even more You rescued us from sin by the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. Send us Your Holy Spirit so that we come to Christ’s altar to receive His true body and blood in Holy Communion, trusting that by it our sins are forgiven. All this we pray in Jesus’ name and as He taught us to pray . .

C: Amen.

Lord’s Prayer and Words of our Lord p.162

Peace of the Lord and Agnus Dei (*“Lamb of God”*) p. 163

Distribution of Holy Communion:

“Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness” - **Hymn #636**

“Christ, the Word of God Incarnate”- **Hymn #540**

Dismissal

Song After Communion: *“Thank the Lord”* p. 164

Prayer After Communion:

P: Let us pray...Gracious Father, Your blessed Son came down to be the true bread which gives life to the world. Give us this bread, that He may live in us, and we in Him, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing p.166 (sung)

Closing Hymn: *“Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer”* - **Hymn #918**

Postlude