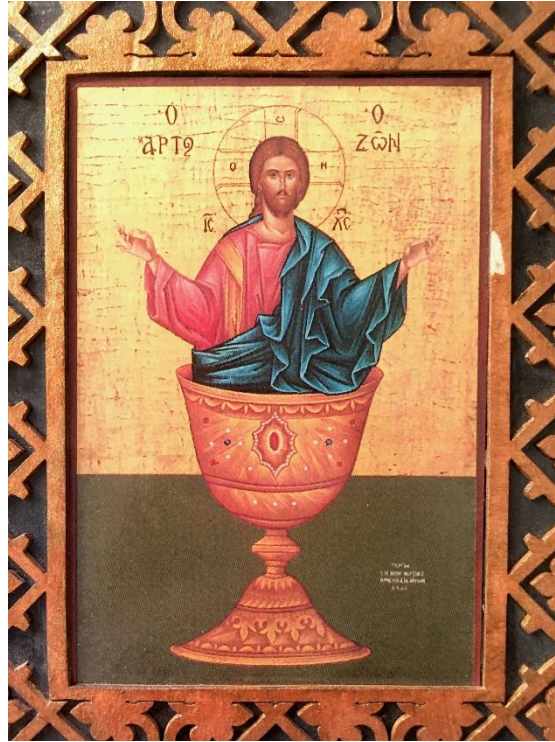


**WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT.
PENTECOST 10
9am Liturgy
Sunday, July 28th, 2024**



The Bread of Life

We have spent these past weeks hearing the word from the Gospel of Mark; in particular his narratives about demons and through this metaphor of suffering, the struggle of people, especially the masses, the majorities to live with hope, dignity and meaning. At the ‘tail end’ of the readings last week, we skipped Mark’s account of the feeding of the 5000 and the event of Jesus walking on the water (Mark 6:30-52), only to turn to them today, but the Gospel of John’s version rather than that of Mark.

While John’s version of the stories is on a first reading almost the same as Mark’s, there are differences in as much as John takes Mark’s narratives and embellishes them with greater symbolism. For John, the story of the Feeding of the 5000 assumes sacramental dimensions, suggesting the eucharist. The emphasis is not upon the miracle of the multiplication of loaves so much, as the fact the Jesus *is* the bread of life given to us. The story of walking on water, goes in a similar direction. For Mark, it is about the power of Jesus over the demons of nature, over that which destroys. John goes further, suggesting that this Jesus very nearly is God, is Yahweh, not just as Mark claims, the bringer of the kingdom. In John, Jesus is in sense promoted higher than in Matthew, Mark or Luke. This very high view of Jesus is what ultimately became the Christian faith, our faith.

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

News and Notices

Acknowledgement of First Nation's People

Let us acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples,
The first inhabitants of this place,
part of God's good creation.
We honour them for their custodianship of the land,
on which we gather today.

A Safe Space

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God, and so we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed, sexuality and gender.

Welcome and Invocation of the Trinity

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit

Lighting the Paschal Candle

Call to Worship

Friends, you are welcome here.

Each of who you —with your regrets and failings—is welcome here.

We come to tell the truth about who we are in relationship with God.

Many of us find it easy to recognize our goodness
and difficult to notice our brokenness.

We come to tell the truth about who we are in relationship with God.

Others of us live under a shroud of guilt and shame,
believing we can never be good enough to receive the fullness of God's
love.

We come to tell the truth about who we are in relationship with God.

As you enter this place, know this: you are loved, accepted, and called.
May God's love draw us to honest confession.

May God's acceptance assure us of the work of Jesus' love in our lives.

May God's invitation compel us to live in a state of grace.

We come to tell the truth about who we are in relationship with God who loves us, accepts us, and calls us. Amen.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Welcoming Song Lord I Lift Your Name on High

Rick Founds © 1989

Lord, I lift your name on high,
Lord, I love to sing your praises.
I'm so glad you're in my life,
I'm so glad you came to save us.

You came from heaven to earth to show the way
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay.
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky,
Lord, I lift your name on high.

A Prayer: Bread is Heaven

This prayer is an adaption of the original by the South Korean dissident Kim Chi Ha (1941-2022), "Food is Heaven". It is seldom remembered that South Korea was not always a booming westernized economy. Subsequent to the Korean War, South Korea functioned under autocratic rule of the Park regime of Park Chung Hee. Kim, a convinced Christian, passed years in solitary confinement during the Park regime and authored a considerable amount of profound and moving poetry. He finally fell out with the movement with democracy which led to a 'parting of the ways'. That said, this poem underscores the idea of bread as life, and reflects his struggle for human dignity.

Bread is heaven
As you cannot go to heaven alone but only with others,
bread is to be shared.

Bread is heaven.
As all share the sight of the heavenly stars,
So, bread is something that must be shared.

Bread is heaven.
When bread passes your throat,
you accept heaven in your body

.

Bread is heaven.

Ah! Bread is something that must be shared.

(From *Declaration of Conscience*, later published in "Suffering and Hope: An Anthology of Asian Writings, Singapore, Christian Conference of Asia, 1976).

Our Confession and Reconciliation

Let us be still and listen to the voice of God

Silence

Let us confess

We eat bread

in its many delectable forms and tastes,

but we cannot imagine its significance to those who have none.

Bread is life.

We eat bread in its many delectable forms and tastes,

but those in Gaza eat the scraps,

under-fed, starved, death silently slithers in,

seizing life: men, women, children, whole extended families.

Bread is life.

We eat bread in its many delectable forms and tastes,

but bread's absence has become weaponized in so many places:

Ukraine, Sudan, the Congo, Venezuela.

Bread is life.

Bread must be shared,

even as the Our Father commands

"Give us sufficient bread for today".

Bread is life

Declaration of Forgiveness

We are the only species

with needs that exceed our grasp.

We are the only species who ask questions

about the purpose of our existence

which our reason is unable to answer.

With all our accomplishments
we stretch out for consolation and explanation.

Amid our restlessness, the good news is this: we are forgiven, released.
We give thanks.

The Peace

LISTENING AND SHARING

All Age

Children's Song Song of Thanks (E Ke Akua)

Trad. Hawaiian

O God Creator (O God Creator)
We give thanks (We give thanks)
Thanks to you, God (Thanks to you,
God)
For this day (For this day)

E ke akua (Eh keh ah-koo-ah)
Mahalo no (Ma-ha-loh noh)
Mahalo ia (Ma-ha-loh ee-ah)
No keia la (Noh keh-ee-ya lah)

Readings:

2 Samuel 11:1-15 pp. 248

This is one of the darkest stories concerning David. Whilst David may have been considerably better than those who followed him, he was nevertheless no angel. Here we read of his fall in his passion for the beautiful Bathsheba and in the process his breathtaking abuse of power, as he plots to have Bathsheba's husband Uriah murdered in the front line of battle, to cover up his (David's) adultery with Bathsheba and his fatherhood of the child who comes from their union. The emphasis in the story is not just about David's abuse of power, but also God's forgiveness of him, but not without David's accountability.

¹In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. ²It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. ³David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying

herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. ⁵The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

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."

Gospel: John 6:1-21

Here we read of John's version of Mark's stories of the Feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking across the water. For John the emphasis is more upon what these actions say about Jesus and his divinity. Jesus so much represents God, that divine attributes easily transfer to him. Mark does not go quite so far, or at least is less militant about the claim.

⁶After this Jesus 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 Lord Jesus Christ

Thinking Together

Affirmation of Faith

Our God has created an abundant universe,
giving life to all, and graciously preserving all.
We believe and trust in God.

Our Saviour has made a way to abundant life,
giving His life for all,
and compassionately inviting all to share in His Kingdom.
We believe and trust in God.

Our Comforter is poured out as the abundant Spirit,
bringing power and gifts to all,
and leading all to fullness of life.

We believe and trust in God, Three in One,
Generous and Loving, Faithful and Eternal. Amen

Offering Song The Colossian Hymn

Malcolm Gordon, arr. Fiona Chua

1. We look to Jesus, seeing God who can't be seen
We look to Jesus, seeing life as it should be.
We look to Jesus, in whom everything began.
For in this Jesus, we all find a place to stand.

Chorus:

*Life began in you, Lord of all you hold us true
All the world is home in your hands.
Life is found in you, all that's broken will be new
Heaven's heart lies open to us now.*

2. We look to Jesus, seeing God in purest grace.
We look to Jesus, where we find our truest place.
We look to Jesus, leading us beyond the grave.
For in this Jesus, all creation can be saved.

Chorus

You are reconciling, making peace through your blood
You're the new beginning for this world.
Heaven and earth are brimming with the life that you bring
You're the morning star that lights the way.

Chorus (x2)

Prayers for the Church and World

Today we pray for **the peoples of the Republic of the Congo - northwest of the larger Democratic Republic of the Congo - São Tomé and Príncipe**. We maintain in our prayers with urgency the peoples of Gaza, as bombardment continues throughout the strip as communities

keep relocating for fear of their lives. We continue to pray for the people of Israel and those who continue 'to govern', even as the International Court of Justice in the Hague – the judicial arm of the UN, finds Israel in serial breach of international human rights law. We also pray for the peoples of Ukraine and Russia, where a nation's attachment to old memories of empire, destroys life.

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;

We pray for:

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

Barriers, walls, and barbed wire mark the frontiers, O Lord.
Help us to transform them into places where we can meet,
with sincerity,
as countries and as persons,
so that the world will know that we are Christians
by the love with which our actions are marked.

(Louise Bakala Koumouno, People's Republic of Congo)

Our Father

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

SENDING OUT

Sending Song Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

Trad. Jamaican, arr. Doreen Potter and Alister Spence, words by Fred Kaan

1. Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy;
bread is broken the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Chorus:

*Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the word around, loaves abound! (repeat)*

2. Christ is able to make us one;
at his table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.

Chorus

3. Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God-Immanuel everywhere!

Chorus

Blessing

Go in peace, and remember:
goodness is stronger than evil;
love is stronger than hate;
light is stronger than darkness;
life is stronger than death.

The blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you always.

Our service has ended.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ.

Liturgist/Preacher: Rev'd Geoff /Rev'd Bruce
Music Coordinator: Jade McFaul
Musicians: Bronwyn Brown (piano)
Readers: Grace & Hyeuk Ryu
Duty Elder: Hyeuk Ryu
Stewards: Robert James and Paul Chen
Video and Sound: Nancy Opdyke and John Alcock