

GATHERING

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin. *(Silence is kept for reflection.)*

Reconciling God, **we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Gathering Song "Break Now the Bread of Life" ELW 515 *(Spoken)*

1. Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, as once you broke the loaves beside the sea. Beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord; my spirit waits for you, O living Word.

2. Bless your own word of truth, dear Lord, to me, as when you blessed the bread by Galilee. Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall; and I shall find my peace, my All-in-All!

3. You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me, your holy word the truth that rescues me. Give me to eat and live with you above; teach me to love your truth, for you are love.

Text: Mary A. Lathbury, 1841-1913, alt. Public Domain

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.**

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray... **Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-5

¹Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

³Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 (Read Responsively)

⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹**LORD, you are good to all, and your compassion is over all your works.**

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season.**

¹⁶You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works.**

¹⁸You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully.

¹⁹**You fulfill the desire of those who fear you; you hear their cry and save them.**

²⁰You watch over all those who love you, but all the wicked you shall destroy.

²¹**My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever.**

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon Sermon summary for August 2, 2020 ~ Pastor Steve Weston

Stories in the Bible about Jesus performing miracles are never just about the miracles. Such stories are told not merely to say, "Wow! Look at how the power of God was at work in Jesus!" They also teach us about the nature of God, of Jesus, and what that means for us. That is certainly true of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

As Matthew tells the story (Matthew 14:13-21), Jesus has just heard about the death of his cousin, John the Baptist, and he tries to get some time away to grieve in peace. But when he gets to the quiet place, he finds it overrun with people who apparently followed him there. So, he takes care of them, healing many who were sick.



At the end of the day, his disciples suggest he send them away to obtain food for themselves. Jesus makes the apparently ridiculous suggestion that the disciples feed the crowds, which remarkably happens when they distribute five small loaves of bread and two small fish.

The obvious point in this story is that indeed the power of God is at work in Jesus. We say of God that he provides our “daily bread,” and here Jesus is providing daily bread. The narrator is giving us a sign that Jesus is indeed God in the flesh. That’s one important point. There are also some important but less obvious points.

Notice that when Jesus blesses the bread and fish, they do not suddenly become a huge pile of food. The supply of food expands only as the disciples distribute it. God gives us the privilege of participating in the divine work.

Skeptics, trying to explain what “really” happened, surmise that Jesus’ small gesture of hospitality (or, as the story is told in John 6, a boy’s offer to share his lunch) inspires everyone to share what they themselves have brought. Maybe this story is a variation on the folk tale, Stone Soup. But even if those skeptics are right, the lesson that it’s good to share is still worthy of our attention.

It’s true that God’s abundance is most fully real when people share that abundance with one another. We know this, and maybe we act on it personally on occasion, but think of the impact it would have on the world if we all embraced this ideal together. We think “love your neighbor as yourself” is a fine religious principle, but we have our doubts about whether it’s good public policy.

In my work as a hospice chaplain, I visited with a Native American man whom I’ll call Roger (not his real name). Roger was a native Ojibwe speaker. As Roger shared stories about his life, he told me of times when he shot moose or deer, of filling up his canoe with wild rice, of big hauls of fish he and his buddies pulled in. The highlight, as he told these stories, was not shooting that animal or those huge hauls of wild rice or fish, but the privilege of sharing the abundance with his family and friends. Roger was also proud of some work he did in his later years helping a linguistics professor write an Ojibwe text book. As with many cultures around the world, Roger grew up in one where a person’s status was based not at all on how much one had or what one achieved, but on how much one shared with others.

It is often said that the Christian faith is about having a “personal relationship with Jesus.” That’s true, as long as we don’t confuse “personal” with “private.” In this context, *personal* is not the opposite of *public*; it’s the opposite of *impersonal*. There is nothing private about being a Christian. Our relationships with others are an essential part of our relationship to God. That means being agents of God’s love. Just as the disciples were the ones distributing the abundance Jesus was providing, we distribute God’s love when we care for others in the ways we say God cares for us, when we share, when we take the side of the poor and the oppressed, when we make sure the disadvantaged are provided for, when we stand up for justice, peace and mercy.

From time to time, some Christians have minimized the importance of efforts on behalf of social causes. They say that the “personal relationship” is the most important thing, so too much focus on other things distracts from the spiritual message. The story from this Gospel reading reminds us that, in God’s eyes, feeding the hungry is every bit as important as preaching the gospel. The spiritual message rings hollow if it’s not accompanied by deeds of love and mercy.

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.

Zion—Skip to Prayers of Intercession

Westboro—Skip to Prayers of Intercession

FYI—Prentice Graduates: Peyton Enders, Karagan Esterholm, Senja Koch, C.C. Murphy, Noah Schanter and Logan Severson.

Ogema Graduates: John Granberg and Hannah Raab

Prentice — Graduation Recognition Blessing

Gracious God, today we give thanks for graduation. You have given these young adults the gifts to achieve this milestone, and have blessed their efforts with success. Bless Peyton, Karagan, Senja, C.C., Noah and Logan as they graduate.

As each graduate begins a new phase in their life, may they also know your love and feel your peace in all the experiences they encounter. By the power of your Holy Spirit, guide them to vocations where they can use the talents you have given them to serve your world.

Bless also the parents of these students, who have raised their children and nourished them in the Christian faith. Give them strength through your constant presence, and give them many joyful reunions with these children as they begin new adventures.

As these graduates go out into the world, may they remember that the members of Northwoods STaR Ministries and First Lutheran Prentice care about them and pray for them. May they be assured that, as members of God's family, they are never alone.

Lord God, bless them all, for Jesus' sake. **Amen**

PRESENTATION OF QUILTS

(Quilters may drape the quilts over the graduates' shoulders)

The quilt you receive today has been lovingly made by our quilters. As they made your quilt they remembered you and how you have grown up and they prayed for you. These quilts are a symbol of the love that Northwoods STaR Ministries and this congregation have for you, and more so, the love that Christ has for you. So, on your future endeavors, take these with you, cuddle up in them, when times are tough and you seem alone, and you will, always remember that you have a family of faith that is praying for you and more important always remember that God is here to watch over you, Jesus is here to be a friend for you and the Holy Spirit is here to help guide and motivate you. Good Luck, God Bless and Congratulations.

Ogema — Graduation Recognition Blessing

Gracious God, today we give thanks for graduation. You have given these young adults the gifts to achieve this milestone, and have blessed their efforts with success. Bless John and Hannah as they graduate.

As each graduate begins a new phase in their life, may they also know your love and feel your peace in all the experiences they encounter. By the power of your Holy Spirit, guide them to vocations where they can use the talents you have given them to serve your world.

Bless also the parents of these students, who have raised their children and nourished them in the Christian faith. Give them strength through your constant presence, and give them many joyful reunions with these children as they begin new adventures.

As these graduates go out into the world, may they remember that the members of Northwoods STaR Ministries and First Lutheran Ogema care about them and pray for them. May they be assured that, as members of God's family, they are never alone.

Lord God, bless them all, for Jesus' sake. Amen

PRESENTATION OF QUILTS

(Quilters may drape the quilts over the graduates' shoulders)

The quilt you receive today has been lovingly made by the quilters at First Prentice. As they made your quilt they thought about you and they prayed for you. These quilts are a symbol of the love that Northwoods STaR Ministries and this congregation have for you, and more so, the love that Christ has for you. So, on your future endeavors, take these with you, cuddle up in them, when times are tough and you seem alone, and you will, always remember that you have a family of faith that is praying for you and more important always remember that God is here to watch over you, Jesus is here to be a friend for you and the Holy Spirit is here to help guide and motivate you. Good Luck, God Bless and Congratulations.

Prayers of Intercession

L: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

L: You take resources that appear to be meager, bless them, and there is enough. May your church trust that what you bless and ask us to share with the world is abundantly sufficient. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#1. Your bountiful creation offers sustenance and life for all creatures. Protect this abundance for the well-being of all. Reverse the damage we have caused your creation. Replenish ground water supplies, provide needed rains in places of drought, and protect forests from wildfires. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#2 You offer yourself to all the nations and peoples of the earth, inviting everyone to abundant life. Bring the prophetic vision to fullness, that all nations will run to you and that nations who do not know you will find their joy in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#3. You offer freely the fullness of salvation. Give us all such a welcoming heart, that our words and actions may extend your free and abundant hospitality to all whom we encounter. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

#4. God of hope, give good courage to all the people of Northwoods STaR Ministries, that we may go wherever you call us, to be the people you created us to be. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



L: You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Hear the anguish of tender hearts who cry to you in suffering and satisfy their deepest needs. Bring wholeness and healing to those who suffer in body, heart, soul, and mind. We especially pray for all those on the prayer list — the family of Agnes Peterson, Dorothy, Ben M., Evelina, Renee, Joe, Isaiah, Gerald, Jason, Dusty, & Kay _____ and all those we name before you now, out loud or in our hearts. *(pause)* Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

(Other prayers added here)

L: In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

MEAL

Offering (The offering plates will be placed near the sanctuary entrances. Please place your offerings in those containers as you exit the worship service today. Thank you.)

Offering prayer

Let us pray...**God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, Lord of life, creator of heaven and earth. Through his death on the cross, your Son Jesus Christ has broken the power of evil, and by his resurrection has opened for us the gate to eternal life. Through him you seek the lost, restoring those whose lives have been shattered and torn apart. In the fullness of time, he will gather all things to himself, enfolding us and all who have died in his undying love.

The Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

Friends of Jesus, come to the table. Receive nourishment for your journey.

COMMUNION

Post-Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. **Amen.**

SENDING

Announcements

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” ELW 815

1. I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain: In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike. The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2. I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus. Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father. *Refrain*

3. I'm looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus. When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus. *Refrain*

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934 Text © 1970, 1975 Celebration.

Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #709391-A

Mission Statements

Northwoods STaR Ministries

“United in Christ, Sharing God's Love”

Zion Brantwood

“We are disciples of Christ: Growing in faith, sharing our faith stories, serving others.”

First Prentice

“We are Jesus' disciples: Welcoming every sinner, sharing Jesus' love and teachings, encouraging all to live Christ-centered lives.”

First Ogema

“We are called and gathered to share Christ as we minister to all, bringing an unchanging God to a changing world.”

First Westboro

“Feeding bodies, minds and spirits through Christ.”

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**