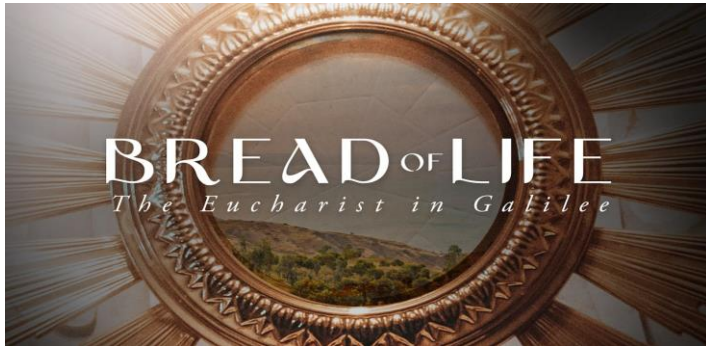


**SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2024 10 AM**  
**ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**JOHN 6:24-35 BREAD OF LIFE**



**ST. JOHN**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

10207 Lincoln Trail  
Fairview Heights, IL  
Telephone 618-397-6323  
e-mail– [stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.stjohnfairview.org](http://www.stjohnfairview.org)  
Rev. Rosemary Captain  
*Organist – Sharon Banjavcic*  
*Liturgy - Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay*  
*Communion Liturgy – Rev. Thom Shuman*  
*Ushers –*

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

\*Please stand if comfortably able  
and respond with words in bold print

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**PRELUDE: “Bread of Life” Ellen Jane Lorenz**

**PENNIES FOR MISSION:**

**UCC Our Churches Wider Mission**

**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

**(Inspired by Psalm 51)**

**One:** The Holy One is just and merciful, righteous and compassionate, wise and near.

**Many: O God, you desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach us wisdom. Enliven joy and gladness within our hearts.**

**One:** We long for your presence and gather before you in gratitude and awe of your steadfast love.

**Many: O God, you desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach us wisdom. Enliven joy and gladness within our hearts.**

**One:** Create just, righteous, and loving hearts within us. Renew our spirits as we declare your praise and seek you in prayer.

**Many: O God, you desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach us wisdom. Enliven joy and gladness within our hearts.**

**\*INVOCATION:**

Gracious God, we give thanks for your presence among us. In the chaos of our lives, you provide calm, healing, and sanctuary. Inspire us to be transformed as you immerse us in your everlasting love and relentless presence. Your Spirit fills the atmosphere as we gather in your name from pew to park and from sanctuary to sofa. Open our receptivity to your word and enflame our imagination of and participation in your kingdom on earth. May it be so. Amen.

**\*OPENING HYMN: 332 “As We Gather at Your Table”**

**\*CALL TO RECONCILIATION:**

When we try to sugarcoat what we have done, scripture stares us down, reminding us of our faults. When we seek to romanticize why we have failed to live as faithful people, God refuses to go along, waiting for us to confess our sins. Let us join together as God's children, lifting our prayers to the One who is generous in love.

**\*UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS:**

**Compassionate One: like David, it is not easy for us to confront those deeds which do not please you. We are so busy looking for the miracles we desire, we cannot see the gift of your presence in others. We are so intent on indulging our appetites and quenching our thirsts, we cannot taste that Bread which gives life. We**

**spend so much of our lives bemoaning the acts of others, we have no time to look in the mirror and see our secret faces.**

**Forgive us, Steadfast Love. Grace us with your mercy, so we might be made whole. Touch our inner being and heal us, so we might know joy and gladness. Create new hearts within us, so they might beat as one with each other, and with your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

**Silence is kept**

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

Despite knowing our sin, God chooses to forgive us; seeing our emptiness, God chooses to feed us; holding our shattered hearts, God chooses to heal us. This is the good news: God loves us. God has graced us with mercy and created new life from our brokenness. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**\*GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat twice)  
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

## **SCRIPTURE LESSONS: 2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a**

### **From “The Message”**

<sup>26-27</sup> When Uriah’s wife heard that her husband was dead, she grieved for her husband. When the time of mourning was over, David sent someone to bring her to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son.

<sup>12</sup> <sup>1-3</sup> But God was not at all pleased with what David had done, and sent Nathan to David. Nathan said to him, “There were two men in the same city—one rich, the other poor. The rich man had huge flocks of sheep, herds of cattle. The poor man had nothing but one little female lamb, which he had bought and raised. It grew up with him and his children as a member of the family. It ate off his plate and drank from his cup and slept on his bed. It was like a daughter to him.

<sup>4</sup> “One day a traveler dropped in on the rich man. He was too stingy to take an animal from his own herds or flocks to make a meal for his visitor, so he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared a meal to set before his guest.”

<sup>5-6</sup> David exploded in anger. “As surely as God lives,” he said to Nathan, “the man who did this ought to be lynched! He must repay for the lamb four times over for his crime and his stinginess!”

<sup>7-12</sup> “You’re the man!” said Nathan. “And here’s what God, the God of Israel, has to say to you: I made you king over Israel. I freed you from the fist of Saul. I gave you your master’s daughter and other wives to

have and to hold. I gave you both Israel and Judah. And if that hadn’t been enough, I’d have gladly thrown in much more. So why have you treated the word of God with brazen contempt, doing this great evil? You murdered Uriah the Hittite, then took his wife as your wife. Worse, you killed him with an Ammonite sword! And now, because you treated God with such contempt and took Uriah the Hittite’s wife as your wife, killing and murder will continually plague your family. This is God speaking, remember! I’ll make trouble for you out of your own family. I’ll take your wives from right out in front of you. I’ll give them to some neighbor, and he’ll go to bed with them openly. You did your deed in secret; I’m doing mine with the whole country watching!”

<sup>13-14</sup> Then David confessed to Nathan, “I’ve sinned against God.”

Nathan pronounced, “Yes, but that’s not the last word. God forgives your sin. You won’t die for it. But because of your blasphemous behavior, the son born to you will die.”

## **RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 51:1-12 Page 657**

### **EPISTLE LESSON: Ephesians 4:1-16**

#### **Unity of the body of Christ**

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord, I encourage you to live as people worthy of the call you received from

God. <sup>2</sup> Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, <sup>3</sup> and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. <sup>4</sup> You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope. <sup>5</sup> There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> and one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

<sup>7</sup> God has given his grace to each one of us measured out by the gift that is given by Christ. <sup>8</sup> That's why scripture says, *When he climbed up to the heights, he captured prisoners, and he gave gifts to people.*<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> What does the phrase "he climbed up" mean if it doesn't mean that he had first gone down into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup> The one who went down is the same one who climbed up above all the heavens so that he might fill everything.

<sup>11</sup> He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> His purpose was to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ <sup>13</sup> until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God's Son. God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> As a result, we aren't supposed to be infants any longer who can be tossed and blown around by every wind that comes from teaching with deceitful scheming and the tricks people play to deliberately

mislead others. <sup>15</sup> Instead, by speaking the truth with love, let's grow in every way into Christ, <sup>16</sup> who is the head. The whole body grows from him, as it is joined and held together by all the supporting ligaments. The body makes itself grow in that it builds itself up with love as each one does its part.

#### **\*GOSPEL LESSON: John 6:24-35**

<sup>24</sup> When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. <sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Bread of life

<sup>26</sup> Jesus replied, "I assure you that you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate all the food you wanted. <sup>27</sup> Don't work for the food that doesn't last but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Human One<sup>[a]</sup> will give you. God the Father has confirmed him as his agent to give life."

<sup>28</sup> They asked, "What must we do in order to accomplish what God requires?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, "This is what God requires, that you believe in him whom God sent."

<sup>30</sup> They asked, "What miraculous sign will you do, that we can see and believe you? What will you do? <sup>31</sup> Our

ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, *He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*"<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Jesus told them, "I assure you, it wasn't Moses who gave the bread from heaven to you, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> The bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

<sup>34</sup> They said, "Sir, give us this bread all the time!"

<sup>35</sup> Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **MESSAGE: "Lost in Translation"**

Do you do cross word puzzles? I gave up on that pastime. My mind was always out of "sync" with the writer of the particular puzzle. For example; the puzzle may be looking for a word that comes before "needle." I'm thinking of knitting needles, darning needles, crochet needles, . . . but the puzzle is looking for the needle on a record player. The puzzle asks for something you find in a shower so I guess soap, shampoo, water, . . but the puzzle wants pumice stone. See what I mean? It's like a different language that needs translation.

That's exactly the problem we find today in our scripture text; the crowd following Jesus is out of sync

with what he is trying to teach them. They translate his message differently. We'll talk more about that in a few minutes. First, let's anchor ourselves on where we are in the story of our Savior.

Today is the second of five Sundays on which the Gospel lessons are drawn from John chapter 6. To prevent us from jumping too far ahead and running out of things to talk about in the next 3 weeks, we should carefully examine how John 6 itself unfolds.

We return now to the principal story – feeding the multitudes, with the feeding being understood in more than one sense. That reminds us of earlier texts in this particular Gospel; Jesus spoke of the temple of God, and his audience thought of a building. Jesus spoke of being born anew, and Nicodemus thought of a mother's womb. Jesus spoke of living water, and a woman thought of Jacob's well. So here Jesus will speak of true bread, and the crowd will think of their next meal. (See what I mean about the crossword puzzle.)

Phase one or level one of the narrative is the provision of bread and fish for a hungry crowd in the wilderness. At this level, the people are not only satisfied but excited about Jesus. They hail him as the new Moses and, in fact, want to enthrone him as king. We have observed, however, that Jesus has more in mind than a meal, evidenced by the usual Johannine preface to a sign in verses 5-6 and by the eucharistic (or

communion language) in verses 11 and 23. The attention given to the gathering of the leftovers of bread and fish is not only out of eucharistic interest but in anticipation of the dialogue on the bread from heaven.

Verses 22-24 set the scene for the second encounter between Jesus and the crowd, this time in Capernaum at the synagogue. It is immediately clear that the people are stuck at level one of the event, the free meal. Their question “When did you come here?” in verse 25 is purely chronological and geographical, but the reader is thinking of the coming of the Son from God for the life of the world. And Jesus charges them with their blind willfulness. They are blind in that they see only food, not a sign of anything more satisfying, more life giving than the next meal. They are willful in that **they** want to “perform the works of God; that is, **they** want to be in charge of their own lives and futures. (Are we guilty of that sometimes?) The crowd’s attempt earlier to enthrone Jesus has made this abundantly clear.

When told that the work of God is faith in the one person God sent, they still want to be in charge, even of faith itself. Just listen to these words. “Show **us** a sign, **we** will weigh the evidence, **we** will draw conclusions, and **we** might even decide to believe.” It’s not likely that this, or any audience, can insist upon being in control of their receiving and of their believing and **still be** open to a message on the bread that is God’s gift from heaven. It

seems that once they, and we, make up our minds about something, it is almost impossible to change it.

However, as we know, Jesus is the expert in doing the impossible.

So stay tuned next week as we find out what happens next. Amen.

**SPECIAL MUSIC: “Let Us Break Bread Together”  
Flute/Piano Duet Stacie/Sharon**

**PASTORAL PRAYER:**

Gentle God: we have traveled through many waters to reach this place, but share one baptism; we arrive from different backgrounds and traditions, yet share one faith; we are, each of us, unique and precious to God, and are members of one Body; we have different dreams and doubts, yet our hearts beat with one hope; we are graced with different gifts, so we may offer them in service to one Lord.

We pray for all our brothers and sisters who are doing just that; serving in God’s purposes and we pray that all of us might find our best talents to do the same. We ask you, dear God, to equip us for the work of ministry. We pray for all of God’s children who are suffering this day; hunger, thirst, diseases, injuries, loneliness, and over whelming sadness. May they find comfort and hope in your loving arms, dear God.

We pray all these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, as we pray together.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**PRAYER RESPONSE: 774**

**Shepherd, lead, lead me in your righteousness,  
Make your way plain before my face.  
For it is you, God, you, God only,  
Who makes me to lie down in safety.**

**INVITATION OF GENEROSITY:** The gifts of God bless us, and the invitation of God is to share those blessings with generosity, gratitude, trust, and love. Let us give of our time, talent, and treasure from the abundance of God's provision to us.

**OFFERTORY: "Fill My Cup Lord" Richard Blanchard**

**\*DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,**

**Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION/OFFERING:**

Use the gifts which we offer to you, Holy God, to restore joy to the despairing, to give food to the hungry, and willing spirits to us, that we might be servants to all your people. Amen.

**THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts, people of God.

**We lift them to our Lord  
so they might be filled with a new spirit,  
joining our voices, here and now,  
Let us give thanks to God who loves us.  
May our willing spirits offer praises  
to the One who feeds us.**

**\*COMMUNION HYMN: 783 "As the Grains of Wheat"**

Our greatest joy is to offer you our thanks and praise,  
Creator, Grace-giver, Healer of our brokenness.  
All that is beautiful was created for our eyes;  
all that is wonderful was created for our awe;  
all that is majestic was created for our praise;

all that is mystery was created for our silence.  
But despite everything you have given us, we are not satisfied.

Believing life is about our appetites,  
we choose the moldy bread of the world;  
knowing our only hope is from you,  
we continue to rebel;  
called to live in unity with one another,  
we cling to all which divides us.

Yet you refuse to let go of us, sending your only Son,  
Jesus, to call us to life in you.  
We have fallen, and you lift us up;  
we have forsaken you, and you redeem us;  
we are broken, and you make us whole.  
Therefore, we praise you, the faithful of every time and  
place, proclaiming to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God of every mercy.  
No has a meeting Spirit. Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is the One who gifts all of God's people!  
Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are you, God of grace and tenderness,  
and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.  
Though we look for him for all the wrong reasons,  
he holds out the bread of life to us;  
though we offer the cross to him,

he graces us with life;  
though we thirst for more and more,  
he offers us the cup of salvation;  
though we gossip and slander one another,  
he speaks the truth in love to us;  
though we would divide each other  
by class, race, or condition,  
he calls us to oneness in you.

Recalling your steadfast love in Christ,  
and knowing we cannot understand your grace  
until that eternal day when we can know your heart,  
we take this bread and this cup, praising and blessing  
you for these gifts of hope and joy.  
Great is the mystery of faith.

**Christ died, a seeming prisoner of death.  
Christ was raised, so all might be freed in resurrection  
love.  
Christ will return, finishing the work of God.**

Holy God of Truth, though we come to your Table as  
many, may your Holy Spirit make us one body and one  
spirit. As you feed us with the Bread of Life,  
may we feed those who know true hunger;  
as your justice illumines our hearts' darkness,  
may we be a beacon to the oppressed and lost;



as you speak to us the truth in love,  
may we be a voice for the powerless and forgotten;  
as you restore us to wholeness,  
may we bind up our shattered world.

**Through Christ who saved us,  
all glory and honor are yours,  
God, who created us in your own image,  
through the Holy Spirit, in our midst making us your  
people, now and forever. Amen.**

**\*UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

**We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed  
us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus  
Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one  
another, and send us forth into the world in courage  
and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN: 342**

**“Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread”**

**\*BENEDICTION:**

Go, in the assurance that you are redeemed.  
Go, with compassion, courage, and conviction that a  
beloved community is possible and waits on your  
participation.

Go, in peace and hope, knowing that God is with us.  
Amen.

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE: “Let There Be Peace on  
Earth”**

**\*POSTLUDE: “Thanks Be to God” Ernest H. Sheppard**