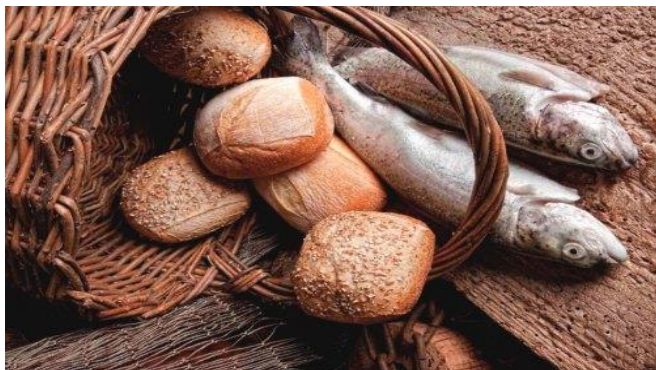


SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2024
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JOHN 6:1-21 | "GATHERING FRAGMENTS"



ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

PRELUDE: "Divine" Comfort Robert J. Hughes

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Hoyleton Ministries

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(Inspired by 145:10-18)

One: We call upon the Holy One, who is near to us. We testify to your power to make your kingdom known among creation.

Many: All your works shall give thanks to you, Holy One, and all your faithful shall bless you.

One: We speak of the glory of your miraculous acts, your abiding presence, and your abundant love.

Many: All your works shall give thanks to you, Holy One, and all your faithful shall bless you.

One: With justice and grace, with hope and mercy, with abundance and discernment, you sustain those in need, you uphold those who have been broken, and you satisfy those who seek a better way.

Many: All your works shall give thanks to you, Holy One, and all your faithful shall bless you.

***INVOCATION:**

Great and Mighty God, we seek your presence among us. We strain to hear your voice as it so often gets

drowned out by the noise of the world. We pause to consider your works, your word, and your way. Speak to us now in spirit and in truth. Open your hand and our hearts that we may join in this moment of holy encounter. Forge us as a community committed to follow the path Jesus has marked for us. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 277 “Holy, Holy, Holy”**

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Creator God, we confess that we fail to recognize the bounty around us. We are not satisfied; we never have enough. We consider what we have received and what we have generated, and label is too little rather than sufficient. We need to cultivate our imagination and our faith to observe abundance and opportunity rather than scarcity and deficiency. Help us to comprehend that, in your kingdom, the fragments you gather are more than enough for flourishing.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, you are enough. God’s grace, strength, love, and hope meet you with sufficiency. Through the Holy One’s sustaining power, we can gather the fragments that make our lives beautiful and God’s kingdom real in the world.

***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 11:1-15

From The Message

David’s Sin and Sorrow

11 When that time of year came around again, the anniversary of the Ammonite aggression, David dispatched Joab and his fighting men of Israel in full force to destroy the Ammonites for good. They laid siege to Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem.

²⁻⁵ One late afternoon, David got up from taking his nap and was strolling on the roof of the palace. From his vantage point on the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was stunningly beautiful. David sent to ask about her, and was told, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite?” David sent his agents to get her. After she arrived, he went to bed with her. (This occurred during the time of “purification” following her period.) Then she returned home. Before long she realized she was pregnant.

Later she sent word to David: “I’m pregnant.”

⁶ David then got in touch with Joab: “Send Uriah the Hittite to me.” Joab sent him.

⁷⁻⁸ When he arrived, David asked him for news from the front—how things were going with Joab and the troops and with the fighting. Then he said to Uriah, “Go home. Have a refreshing bath and a good night’s rest.”

⁸⁻⁹ After Uriah left the palace, an informant of the king was sent after him. But Uriah didn’t go home. He slept that night at the palace entrance, along with the king’s servants.

¹⁰ David was told that Uriah had not gone home. He asked Uriah, “Didn’t you just come off a hard trip? So why didn’t you go home?”

¹¹ Uriah replied to David, “The Chest is out there with the fighting men of Israel and Judah—in tents. My master Joab and his servants are roughing it out in the fields. So, how can I go home and eat and drink and enjoy my wife? On your life, I’ll not do it!”

¹²⁻¹³ “All right,” said David, “have it your way. Stay for the day and I’ll send you back tomorrow.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem the rest of the day.

The next day David invited him to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk. But in the evening Uriah again went out and slept with his master’s servants. He didn’t go home.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In the letter he wrote, “Put Uriah in the front lines where the fighting is the fiercest. Then pull

back and leave him exposed so that he’s sure to be killed.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 14 Page 626

EPISTLE LESSON: Ephesians 3:14-21

Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴ This is why I kneel before the Father. ¹⁵ Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by him. ¹⁶ I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. ¹⁷ I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, ¹⁸ I ask that you’ll have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. ¹⁹ I ask that you’ll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.

²⁰ Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; ²¹ glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

***GOSPEL LESSON: John 6:1-21**

Feeding of the five thousand

6 After this Jesus went across the Galilee Sea (that is, the Tiberias Sea). ² A large crowd followed him, because they had seen the miraculous signs he had done among the sick. ³ Jesus went up a mountain and sat there with his

disciples. ⁴ It was nearly time for Passover, the Jewish festival.

⁵ Jesus looked up and saw the large crowd coming toward him. He asked Philip, “Where will we buy food to feed these people?” ⁶ Jesus said this to test him, for he already knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip replied, “More than a half year’s salary^[a] worth of food wouldn’t be enough for each person to have even a little bit.”

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said, ⁹ “A youth here has five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that for a crowd like this?”

¹⁰ Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass there. They sat down, about five thousand of them. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the bread. When he had given thanks, he distributed it to those who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, each getting as much as they wanted. ¹² When they had plenty to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather up the leftover pieces, so that nothing will be wasted.” ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves that had been left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ When the people saw that he had done a miraculous sign, they said, “This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world.” ¹⁵ Jesus understood that they were

about to come and force him to be their king, so he took refuge again, alone on a mountain.

Jesus walks on water

¹⁶ When evening came, Jesus’ disciples went down to the lake. ¹⁷ They got into a boat and were crossing the lake to Capernaum. It was already getting dark and Jesus hadn’t come to them yet. ¹⁸ The water was getting rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When the wind had driven them out for about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the water. He was approaching the boat and they were afraid. ²⁰ He said to them, “I Am.^[b] Don’t be afraid.” ²¹ Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and just then the boat reached the land where they had been heading.

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: “Who is He? Is he a prophet like Moses?”

You may remember that a few weeks ago our Gospel story was about Jesus’ return to his hometown. The people who knew Jesus growing up among them wanted to know who he was now that he started ministering and healing people in the whole region. “Who are you, Jesus?” or better yet, “who do you think you are?”

Today our passages describe Jesus doing miracles or signs as they are called in the Gospel of John. The un-

named people in the crowds who have been chasing Jesus around the coast of the Sea of Galilee want to know who Jesus is. Is he a prophet like Moses? Let's look at the clues for an answer.

First of all, you may notice that for the next five consecutive Sundays our Gospel lections will be drawn from the Gospel of John chapter 6. We will have the opportunity to refresh ourselves in the Johannine perspective of some familiar events in our New Testament.

The Fourth Evangelist, the author of the Gospel of John, wants to highlight the fact that Jesus keeps the Passover as far as possible from Jerusalem, the scene of his rejection at another Passover time. Jesus will die as the Passover lamb in Jerusalem, but now he will observe a Passover meal with the more receptive people in the hill country on the other side of the Sea of Galilee (6:1). Because this Gospel has no eucharistic last meal in an upper room, as do Matthew, Mark and Luke, this narrative is John's theological equivalent of the "last supper."

For the Jews, Passover is celebrated every year to remember the first Passover - the time when God liberated the children of Israel from Egypt, and led them through the wilderness to the promised land. Who was the Jewish leader of this liberation? Moses. (Stay tuned for more parallels to Moses.) The whole of this long

sixth chapter of John's gospel is dominated by the theme of Passover, or rather one aspect of it: the fact that God **fed** the children of Israel, during their wilderness wanderings, with "bread from heaven." The story is told in Exodus 16, where the "manna" is provided by God because the people are grumbling and complaining. (Another clue for us is the fact that manna was provided by God, not Moses. This will be important in next week's lesson.)

So today we have the feeding of the 5,000 as described in the Gospel of John. The reaction of the people – and the response of Jesus to their reaction – are both very telling. Remember how John the Baptist emphatically declared that he was not the **Messiah**, nor was he "the prophet" as mentioned in chapter 1:20-21? Here in verse 14, we have "the prophet" spoken of again: the "prophet like Moses", predicted in Deuteronomy 18, the coming great leader who would do for the people what Moses did, leading them from slavery to freedom.

So, what happens? After the 5,000 people ate, Jesus' Jewish hearers on the hill quickly made the jump from "prophet" to "Messiah". The term Messiah means the anointed one. Who else gets anointed? **The king**. If Jesus is the great prophet promised so long ago, then he is the one to lead the people now. This is heavily ironic; because the writer of the Gospel of John wants

us to believe that Jesus is the **Messiah**, that he is indeed the prophet like Moses. **But** the reaction of the crowds shows that they understand both of these, in what Jesus regards, **as a quite inadequate sense**. In much of the rest of this chapter, Jesus will attempt to move them towards a deeper and truer understanding. We must hope and pray that this chapter has that effect on us as well.

Next Sunday we will read some very important words from Jesus, very rich in metaphors, yet very enlightening for all of us. If you can't be here next Sunday, please read for yourselves the entire chapter 6 of John. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "How Firm a Foundation" video
The Petersons

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Hearer of prayers. Giver of wisdom. Advocate of God's people, we give thanks for every human leader who has sought and received your gifts, who has known and served you. We thank you for patriarchs and matriarchs, that you are the God of Sarah as well as of Abraham, of Rebekah as well as of Isaac, of Rachel as well as Jacob. You make yourself known in days of pilgrimage as in years of exile and in periods of settlement. There is no place on earth where you cannot be worshiped and called upon, by whatever name or title, in any language,

by people of many faults and faiths and differing customs. You deserve the thanksgiving of everyone everywhere, for you are God of all; responsive, generous, and compassionate.

Hear your people as we pray for your church that it may graciously offer our sacraments with generosity, that those who come to you may never be hungry and those who believe in you may never be thirsty or work again for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life.

To your tender mercies and healing care we commend all who suffer, all who are sick, all who are hurting physically or mentally. Soothe and comfort all the troubled, calm the anxious, cool the fevered, strengthen the weak. Grant wisdom and carefulness to all surgeons, physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, and medical technicians that our hospitals and clinics may bring new health to many. Bless all pastors and chaplains who minister to the dying that their final days may be trustful and expectant of your mercy.

We keep in our prayers today all those suffering in our excessive heat hitting our world this week. May they find relief in cooling stations, air conditioning, neighbors and family who can help.

To you, our God, Parent, Brother, Sister, and Holy Spirit,

Be given all the glory, time without end, 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 TO GENEROSITY:

Generosity encourages us to consider what we have to share beyond our own use. May we exhibit the generosity of the young person found in the gospel narrative that shared their lunch when Philip surveyed the crowd of thousands. The miracle starts with that act of sharing and faith.

OFFERTORY: "To a Wild Rose" Edward MacDowell

***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 THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

Sustaining God, receive our offerings and magnify them beyond our imagination for the benefit of your kingdom, this ministry, and your creation. Cultivate a heart of generosity within us and enable us to witness the abundance that can be found in the fragments that remain as testimony to your power at work in us. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 403**

"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"

***BENEDICTION: (Inspired by Ephesians 3:16-21)**

May you, according to the riches of God's glory, the presence of Christ, and by power of the Spirit, be strengthened in your inner being, be rooted and grounded in love, and be filled with the fullness of God. To the Holy One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE:**

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

POSTLUDE: “Postlude in C” George Blake

PRAYER LIST:

(Lisa, don't forget to take Stan off the prayer list.

Thanks, rc)