



Sunday, August 2, 2020  
9th Sunday after Pentecost  
Holy Communion

*In today's first reading God invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world*

*today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.*

**WELCOME!** We are glad to have you join us in worship today. Here are a few notes to help you feel more at home participating in our worship.

**Worshipping.** Today's service is printed in this bulletin. Parts in bold indicate responses by everyone in which you are invited to participate.

**Adjustments to our service.** In order to comply with safety and social distancing guidelines, it will be mandatory that everyone have a face covering and everyone must be mindful of keeping their distance from others. Please refrain from mingling in confined spaces before and/or after service.

Other adjustments are:

- Congregational singing is discouraged. If you feel you must, please sing softly with your mask in place.
- The sign of the PEACE will be offered by a wave or bow while staying in place.
- The OFFERING PLATE will not be passed or brought forward. It will be in the back of the sanctuary instead.
- If this is a service of HOLY COMMUNION, communion elements will be available as you exit the sanctuary.
- At the conclusion of the service, everyone is asked to remain in their pew. Masked ushers will dismiss people by row to maintain safe spacing.
- The Sanctuary, Narthex and Broadway lobby are the only areas open. All other areas of St. Stephen's are closed.

**Prayer Requests.** Please call the office you'd like to place someone on our prayer list.

**PRELUDE:** Love The Lord Your God

**+ GATHERING +**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P In the name of the Father,  
and of the + Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**C Amen.**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Most merciful God,

**C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG: *Jesus, Come! For We Invite You* (ELW 312)**

*You are invited to listen*

*Jesus, come! for we invite you,  
guest and master, friend and Lord;  
now, as once at Cana's wedding,  
speak and let us hear your word:  
lead us through our need or doubting,  
hope be born and joy restored.*

**GREETING**

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

A Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!  
Let your gentleness be evident to all, for the Lord is near.

**C Let us not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,  
By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God.**

A Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

**C Let our gentleness be evident to all, for the Lord is near.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P 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.

**C Amen.**

**+ WORD +**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-5**

*God invites Israel to a great feast at which both food and drink are free. God also promises to make an everlasting covenant with all peoples, with promises that previously had been limited to Israel. As David was a witness to the nations, these nations shall now acknowledge the ways in which God has glorified Israel.*

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>1</sup>Ho, 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.

<sup>2</sup>Why 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.

<sup>3</sup>Incline 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.

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

<sup>5</sup>See, 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. **C Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: Romans 9:1-5**

*This begins a new section in Paul's letter in which he will deal with the place of Israel in God's saving plan. He opens by highlighting how Israel's heritage and legacy include being God's children, having God's covenants, being given God's law, participating in worship of God, and receiving divine promises.*

A reading from Romans.

<sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup>I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For 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. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; <sup>5</sup>to 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. **C Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 14:13-21**

*After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.*

P The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**C Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>13</sup>Now 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. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup>When 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.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” <sup>17</sup>They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” <sup>18</sup>And he said, “Bring them here to me.” <sup>19</sup>Then 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. <sup>20</sup>And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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

## **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY: *When the Poor Ones: Cuando el pobre* (ELW 725)**  
*All are invited to listen.*

*When the poor ones, who have nothing, still are giving;  
when the thirsty pass the cup, water to share;  
when the wounded offer others strength and healing:*

*Refrain:*

*We see God, here by our side, walking our way;  
we see God, here by our side, walking our way.*

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

A With the whole Church, we confess our faith:

**C 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.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

*A brief silence.*

A 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,

**C hear our prayer.**

A 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,

**C hear our prayer.**

A 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,

**C hear our prayer.**

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.

Lord, in your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

A You offer freely the fullness of salvation. Give our congregation 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,

**C hear our prayer.**

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

**C Amen.**

## **PEACE**

*The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.*

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C And also with you.**

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace with a wave or bow while staying in place.*

## **MUSICAL INTERLUDE: Cares Chorus**

**+ MEAL +**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,  
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out your Holy Spirit,  
that by this Holy Communion we may know  
the unity we share with all your people  
in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

**C Amen**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**C 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.**

*Communion will be distributed at the conclusion of our worship service as you exit the sanctuary. After the presiding minister hands you the wafer, take one individual cup of wine or juice, partake of communion and dispose of the used cup in the trash container.*

**+ SENDING +**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

### **BLESSING**

P Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**SENDING SONG: *Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises* (ELW 535)**

*All are invited to listen*



*Refrain*

*Hallelujah! We sing your praises,  
all our hearts are filled with gladness.*

*Hallelujah! We sing your praises,  
all our hearts are filled with gladness. Repeat*

*Christ the Lord to us said:*

*I am wine, I am bread,*

*I am wine, I am bread,*

*give to all who thirst and hunger. Refrain*

## **DISMISSAL**

**A** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE:** In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

## **Unreasonable Love**

Imagine throwing an impromptu dinner party for thousands of people. Looking out at the huge crowd, would you think, “Yeah, we can do this. It’ll be fun!”? Or would you look in your fridge, cupboards, and freezer and become absolutely certain there was not enough to go around?

It is normal and human to look at the supplies available and make a judgment about whether or not something can be accomplished. It’s reasonable, even! But God’s kingdom is not reasonable. God’s kingdom defies all of our human expectations. It is not reasonable that the last shall be first. It is not reasonable that God would pour forgiveness on us when we hardly know how to confess. It is not reasonable that the disciples could feed thousands of people with just a few loaves and fishes.

Thanks be to God for the unreasonable, unexpected grace we find in the kingdom! May we brim with gratitude that where we see limits, God knows what is possible. When we stare in shock at the Son of God nailed to the cross, we are sure it’s the end of the story, but God knows differently: love and life are unreasonably more abundant than hatred and death.

When we bring whatever “loaves and fishes” we have in our cupboards to God, God blesses them and makes of them enough. At the Lord’s table, we find the mystery of Christ’s abundant presence in the bread and the wine. At the font, we are joined to the immeasurable, eternal covenant of being God’s beloved through the profuse waters of baptism. It’s preposterous, really, how lavishly, how unreasonably God loves the world! Let us rejoice in God’s unreasonable love and mercy, and join the feast.