

## Worship Resources - Food Service

<https://youtu.be/Eq9-zuhHG8o>

**Pentecost 12, Year B,**

15<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

**Proverbs 9:1-6 CEV / John 6:51-58 CEV**

**Prelude**            *A Dream Of Hope, Op. 15, no. 7*

by Robert Schumann, played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/t6kUKNrM9VY>

### Call to Worship

If you arrive here hungry for more of that divine bread which feeds your soul, then I welcome you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I, your minister, may sometimes disappoint you, but he will not. His grace is sufficient for all your needs.

*Jesus says: "I am the bread of life. Those who come to me shall not hunger, and those who believe in me shall never thirst."*

**I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.**

**As we gather today, let us reflect on the lyrics of our first song, Here In This Place. What does it mean to share the bread of life? Let's think about what "this place" really is.**

**Reflection Video**    *Here In This Place with Virtual Choir*

written by Marty Hauge,

posted to YouTube and performed by the Ferryhill Parish Church

<https://youtu.be/kTbOxrlQ0zo>

### Invocation

Feed us now, Child of God, as you fed your first disciples. Feed us with that soul-food which nurtures enough love within us to outstrip the fears and enmity that ties the world up in knots. Feed us with that spiritual bread which strengthens our hands for serving those broken and lost people whom this world deems a waste of space. Feed us, so that we may be fulfilled with some of that joy which the universe cannot contain. For your love's sake. **Amen!**

**We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.**

**This morning, we are blessed to have Harriet Koscho, who represented our congregation at our denominations Annual Conference, give us an update on her experience and what transpired at that virtual gathering.**

## **Annual Conference Report**

**Harriet Koscho**

I went to the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, which was entirely online. So I would get up at 7 in the morning and meet people around my “table” to talk about things in the church. In the afternoons I would go in and out of Zoom sessions including “Equipping sessions”, “Insight sessions”, and various other meetings of this sort. They had a Bible study about Revelation, and it was very good - I learned a lot.

Overall it was pretty disappointing, because I was really only able to interact with the 6 people around my own “table”, and furthermore, some of them didn’t have their camera on. So I felt like I was missing a lot of personal interaction. It seemed easier to avoid controversy because we weren’t able to explore each other’s thinking so much. Still, given that it was all virtual, they did an amazing job of making everything very accessible.

The main business of the conference was to approve the Compelling Vision. Leading up to the conference there was a district-wide Bible study that lasted several weeks. It explained in more depth the various parts of this plan to move forward as a denomination. This was voted on, and approved.

I’m going to read the mission statement of the Compelling Vision, along with an excerpt from the expanded explanation of what each phrase might mean for churches like ours. The overall theme is “Jesus in the Neighborhood”:

***VISION STATEMENT Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.***

I guess my favorite word there is “fearless”! The following excerpt really resonated with me in terms of what I think we are called to do:

*When we speak of “holistic peace” we are referring to Shalom. Since God’s kingdom has already begun, but not yet complete, we are called by God to strive for and participate in Shalom, both in small, everyday ways and in large, systemic ways. For example:*

- *To help others learn about Jesus and become his disciples is to participate in Shalom.*
- *To work to transform conflict, whether between individuals or nations, is to participate in Shalom.*
- *To directly address mental health issues is to participate in Shalom.*
- *To care for God's creation that has been entrusted to us is to participate in Shalom.*

So that's a great example of what I think is wonderful about the Church of the Brethren! I missed in particular seeing folks like Ken Rieman and Bobbi Dykema in the hallways, but we will get together NEXT TIME! Thank you.

**In our reading from Proverbs today, we are encouraged to partake in fellowship with wisdom. As we listen to these words from this wisdom text, let's reflect on where we find wisdom and spiritual growth.**

## **First Testament Reading      Proverbs 9:1-6 CEV**

Wisdom has built her house with its seven columns.

She has prepared the meat and set out the wine. Her feast is ready.

She has sent her servant women to announce her invitation from the highest hills:

“Everyone who is ignorant or foolish is invited!

All of you are welcome to my meat and wine.

If you want to live, give up your foolishness and let understanding guide your steps

## **Scripture Video**

### **Proverbs 9:1-6**

### ***Invited To Dine At Wisdom's Feast***

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/HMI3-TbECGw>

## **A Time of Prayer**

**Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: [vicarglenn@gmail.com](mailto:vicarglenn@gmail.com), and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.**

## Joys and Concerns

Let's keep Myrna in prayer this week as she continues to recover from a fall and as she prepares to move to her new apartment.

Remember also Jeremiah, as he suffered a brain event this week similar to a stroke, related to previous sports-related head traumas. May he experience healing and comfort as he recovers.

Today let's also remember those who have lost loved ones to COVID. May they feel God's comfort and presence in their loss.

Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.

## Pastoral Prayer

**Eternal God, we thank you today for your goodness. You have given us beautiful days. You bless us richly with goodness daily. We thank you and praise you.**

**We bring before you our troubles and concerns, our thanks and gratitude. Hear our prayers of petition and thanksgiving. Yet we often find ourselves in turmoil.**

We live in a time of considerable confusion. We ask today for your wisdom as Solomon asked for wisdom.

We are often fearful as was Solomon. We live in a time of peril, war, and world unrest. Different and competing interests strive for our attention and loyalty. Help us, O God, to pray for wise and discerning spirits.

- Give us wisdom to know good from evil.
- Give us wisdom to assess the clamoring voices and concerns with which we are daily bombarded.
- Give us wisdom so that we might learn to be accepting of all the diverse people you have created.
- Give us wisdom to be peacemakers and mediators of understanding where there is conflict.
- Give us wisdom when we are in conflict to make it possible both for us and for those with whom we differ to save face and win and move forward hand in hand.
- Give us wisdom not to violate any of your creatures by discriminating against them.
- Give us wisdom to discern what is of ultimate value for our souls and to make wise choices.

**O God, give us wisdom. O God, give us discernment. O God, give us the will to be faithful. O God, give us the power to love. Amen.**

**In our gospel lesson this morning, we again hear Jesus talking about the metaphor of being the bread of life. As we listen to these words from John, let's think about where we seek spiritual nourishment, and whether we find what we seek.**

## **Gospel Lesson      John 6:51-58 CEV**

I am that bread from heaven! Everyone who eats it will live forever. My flesh is the life-giving bread that I give to the people of this world.

They started arguing with each other and asked, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that you won't live unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man.

But if you do eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will have eternal life, and I will raise you to life on the last day.

My flesh is the true food, and my blood is the true drink.

If you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you are one with me, and I am one with you.

The living Father sent me, and I have life because of him. Now everyone who eats my flesh will live because of me.

The bread that comes down from heaven isn't like what your ancestors ate. They died, but whoever eats this bread will live forever.

## **Scripture Video      John 6:51-58** ***Christ The True Food And Drink***

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/rKKCLzwc7C4>

## **Message - Food Service**

When we think of food, what's the first thing that comes to our mind? Is it the delicious aroma of our favorite dishes, or the taste of those delicacies that can make our mouth water? It also might make us think about the meals shared with others, or the celebrations of our lives where food plays a central part. Our thoughts about food change during the course of our lives as well. When we're young, we seek the food that tastes the best, that we enjoy eating the most, and often avoid that which we don't find enticing. Then as we age, and words like "glucose, cholesterol, and triglycerides" enter our vocabulary, our focus can shift yet again. We start to seek foods that keep our body running well, and that try to reduce the damage of the aging process.

Regardless of our current perspective on food in our lives, how much thought do we give to the actual nuts and bolts of the relationship between ourselves and food? We get hungry and we eat. What more is there? Well, a lot happens when we put food into our mouths, chew and swallow. Our stomach acid and other enzymes start to chemically alter what we eat from the first moment we put the food in our mouths. Those chemicals in our body convert the complex compounds in our food into more basic elements, that are then absorbed into our bloodstream and extracted by the tissues and cells that need them. As a liberal arts major in college, that's about the extent of my biology knowledge, but the main point is that our bodies change what we eat into elements that are absorbed into and become integral parts of our own bodies. And what isn't converted is, well, "discarded," in one way or the other. You might say we are a self-sustaining, well-designed chemical power plant that converts organic fuel into the energy and support the factory needs to keep running. That covers the our physical nourishment, but what about our spiritual needs? How does that system run?

Well, that's where our story from John comes in today. Jesus goes into detail to discuss how we feed our spiritual body's needs. But as he often does in John, he starts a little on the controversial side to get their attention. Initially he starts by comparing himself to the manna from heaven that the Israelites survived on during the Exodus story. He ties himself to the central story of their history as a people and their covenant with their God. Certainly that would generate debate with the religious authorities in the audience at Capernaum, but he takes it a step further. He doesn't just say that he himself as an individual person is manna, but actually says that it is his flesh, the meat on his bones, that is the bread of life from God. And pushing the envelope even further he adds that unless you eat his flesh and drink his blood, you have no life in you. In other words, you won't see eternal life.

Now for us, looking back a couple of millennia later, we might say what's the big deal? The New Testament is full of these metaphors for Jesus' sacrifice and our redemption. What is different in these passages is the words he chooses to use. In the rest of the canon, when talking about the Eucharistic body, the word that is used is "soma" which is the generic term for the body as a whole. But the word he uses in this passage, "sarx," actually means one's flesh, the literally meat and tissues on our bones. He is intentionally using language that will pull his listeners away from that positive cultural memory of manna from heaven into a completely different territory.

For us, the thought of eating human flesh brings to mind grotesque images of things like the TV show "The Walking Dead" or the story of the Donner party. For his contemporary Jewish audience, they would be reminded of similarly distasteful stories and legends, and would see such notions as abominations on multiple fronts. Jewish dietary law strictly forbids the consumption of blood as blasphemous. The butchering process, especially for temple sacrifice, involved the draining and separation of the flesh from the blood. The blood is poured out on the altar and only the meat is consumed.

I would argue that sacrifice is exactly where Jesus is steering the crowd. John's gospel is particularly focused on a high Christology and atonement. In other words, this gospel, more than the others, focuses on this notion of Jesus being the incarnation of God in human flesh, and it's in John that we first hear Christ being referred to as the "Lamb of God." John's gospel stresses that it's through his sacrificial death that we receive atonement and redemption. Jesus is laying the groundwork for the salvation to come through the crucifixion and resurrection.

In John, we don't have the same story of the Passover and the initial communion meal. This passage is the only one that refers to body and blood, but as we have seen, it is referenced in a much different context. So what do we do with this language? Well, certainly it lays out very clearly the meaning and value of the crucifixion, and the brutal reality of the sacraments of communion. But I would also argue it lays out the importance of being fed. Unlike the more generic depictions of the Eucharist, this story makes the elements the real deal, flesh and blood.

Some of the early church traditions took this in a very literal sense, that when the sacraments were blessed, they became the literal body and blood of Christ. While I respect those traditions, I still think Jesus was talking in metaphors, not meaning literal meat and blood. But how much like the real food we eat in life should this spiritual meal be? As I mentioned earlier, when we consume physical food, our bodies change and absorb that food and it becomes an integral part of us.

So what happens when we consume Christ? Do we also change and absorb Christ so that he becomes like us? Or is Jesus implying in our passage today that something different occurs when we partake of his meal. He intentionally pulls us away from the existing metaphor of manna, from God being the bread of life, to himself. He makes the point that what sustained us before eventually led to death, not to life. Unlike the food that sustains our physical body, this food should transform and absorb us, not the other way around. Is Jesus changing you into something new, or are you changing Jesus to fit the way you've always been? It's clear that the spiritual nourishment Christ offers differs from what's come before.

Like in our text from Proverbs this morning, the meal he provides should move us away from immaturity to live and walk in Christ's ways, the ways of wisdom, the ways that lead to life. As in our physical bodies, this new bread of life should replace the old ways, and those ways should be discarded. Are you seeking the right nourishment and is it moving you to be more like Jesus, or are you just looking for what fits into who you are now? And what about the community of faith? Do we seek the nourishment that will change us, or just what keeps us going as we always have?

I'll close today with a little story, if you'll excuse the pun, of food for thought. There was a beggar who came and sat before a baker. "I want bread," he said. "How wise you are," the baker assured him. "Bread is what you need. And you have come to the right bakery." So he

pulled his cookbook down from his shelf and began to tell the beggar all he knew about bread. He spoke of flour and wheat, of grain and barley. The baker's knowledge impressed even himself as he cited the measurements and recipe. When he looked up, he was surprised to see that the beggar wasn't smiling. "I just want bread," he said. "How wise you are." The baker applauded his choice. "Follow me, and I'll show you our bakery." Down the hallowed halls he guided him, pausing to point out the rooms where the dough is prepared and the ovens where the bread is baked. "No one has such facilities. We have bread for every need. But here is the best part," he proclaimed as he pushed open two swinging doors. "This is our room of inspiration." The baker knew the beggar was moved as they stepped into the auditorium full of stained-glass windows. The beggar didn't speak. The baker understood his silence. With his arm around his shoulder, he whispered, "It overwhelms me as well." Then the baker leaped to the podium and struck his favorite pose behind the lectern. "People come from miles to hear me speak. Once a week my workers gather, and I read to them the recipe from the cookbook of life." By now the beggar had taken a seat on the front row. The baker knew what he wanted. "Would you like to hear me?" "No," he said, "but I would like some bread." "How wise you are," The baker replied. And he led him to the front door of the bakery. "What I have to say next is very important," he told him as they stood outside. "Up and down this street you will find many bakeries. But take heed; they don't serve the true bread. I know of one who adds two spoons of salt rather than one. I know of another whose oven is three degrees too hot. They may call it bread," the baker warned, "but it's not according to the book." The beggar turned and began walking away. "Don't you want bread?" the baker asked him. He stopped, looked back, and shrugged, "I guess I lost my appetite." The baker shook his head and returned to his office. "What a shame," he said to himself. "The world just isn't hungry for true bread anymore."

So what do you think of that story? Are we the baker or the beggar? Does our bakery provide bread that truly feeds the spiritual needs of others? Or maybe we are looking for bread that doesn't meet our true needs. This week let's give thought as to how we feed ourselves spiritually, and think about whether we find ourselves transformed, or whether we simply absorb it and discard it with no growth. Likewise, let's think as a community, let's think about our product, if what we're baking really feeds the needs of others, or do we just offer the same old stale bread. May God lead us to the true nourishment. Amen.

## **Call to Serve.**

Through our offerings we identify with the cause of Christ. We proclaim our concern for all people, and we name them all as our next of kin. We identify with their suffering and grief and we rejoice when good comes to them. God gives both our material resources and our personal time and effort to us. Let us now extend them through the body of Christ into this moment of history and into the whole world.



As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as we listen to this selection played by our own Annie Center, let's reflect on how we can seek our own spiritual nourishment in the coming week, and how we can encourage others in their journeys.

## **A Time for Reflection**

### **Reflection on the Word [Video]**

<https://youtu.be/ZETBISoQctw>

### ***Song Without Words***

Op. 19, no. 4 By Felix Mendelssohn,  
played by Annie Center

## **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Lord, you are the bread of heaven, giving life to the world. You fill our emptiness with your goodness. You come to our weakness with your strength. Take and use these gifts to bring in a rich harvest of your heavenly food and life-giving refreshment.

## **Blessing/Assurance**

Filled to the brim with the goodness of God; the nourishment of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, and the power of the Holy Spirit, go now in peace to serve God in all that you think, do and say. God's peace will always be with you. AMEN.

**As we extinguish this candle, let's carry it's divine spark into our own lives this week, shining God's like into the lives of all we encounter. Amen.**

### **Postlude**

### ***Pastoral***

from Mozart Piano Sonata K. 331, played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/9hPZVb9ZG5s>