



52C Pentecost 12B - Online Liturgy Life Giving

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2021 | AFTER PENTECOST | PROPER 15 | YEAR B

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament 1 Kings 2:10–12, 3:3–14

Psalm Psalm 111

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Proverbs 9:1–6

Psalm Psalm 34:9–14

New Testament Ephesians 5:15–20

Gospel John 6:51–58ⁱ

Jesus talks about himself as ‘living bread’, which finds the Jews asking themselves, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ Jesus talks of this in a very literal way; eating his flesh and drinking his blood. However, he also talks about living in him and drawing life from him. This is how he makes the link between eating his flesh and receiving eternal life.

In Jesus’ description of himself as living bread, we are reminded that bread is one of the basics or essentials of life. The neediest person who has bread (and water) has life. Jesus offers his very being to anyone who wants life. Are we ready to receive him?

This week we explore what Jesus means by being living bread.

	Pre-Service
	Introit Bread of Angels - Mann
	Greeting May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all and also with us
	We Gather As we come to worship, are we hungry for God or satisfied by all the comforts of our life? As we hear God’s word, do we want to be fed or have we had enough? Jesus invites us to feast with him: let us come, for all is ready. Acknowledgements

	<p><i>Let us pray</i> Jesus, our living bread, we have an appetite for you, and we come wanting to feed on your word. Jesus, you offer life to the world, eternal life, raising us up on the last day. Keep us hungry for you, with the anticipation of a feast of the finest food – food that brings life. Amen.</p>
	<p>We say Sorry</p> <p>Lord, when we are not as hospitable as you were, forgive us, Lord, we pray. When we drain life out of people rather than be life giving, forgive us, Lord, we pray. When we damage relationships rather than repair them, forgive us, Lord, we pray. When we seek ‘self’ first and don’t share who we are, forgive us, Lord, we pray. Make us whole, Lord. Make us whole today. Amen.</p>
	<p>Words of Assurance</p> <p>Lamb of God, you paid the ultimate price on the cross, your body was broken and your blood shed – and by your stripes we are healed and forgiven. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #636 – “God has spoken to his people, hallelujah!”</p>
	<p>Welcome</p> <p>For some weeks now, If your preachers have been following the Gospel readings. We will have had a diet of Jesus, the bread of life.</p> <p>Jesus again this week describes himself as ‘living bread’, which finds the Jews asking themselves, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ It almost sounds like cannibalism. It can be a confusing for us even now</p> <p>Jesus talks of this in a very literal way; eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He also talks about living in him and drawing life from him.</p> <p>In Jesus’ description of himself as living bread,</p>

	<p>we are reminded that bread is one of the basics or essentials of life.</p> <p>In the poorest homes, If the neediest person has bread (and water) they have life. Jesus offers his very being to anyone who wants life. He is saying just like Bread is essential so is He. Are we ready to receive him?</p> <p>This week we explore what Jesus means by being living bread.</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Lamb of God, giver of life, ultimate sacrifice: we bow at your throne.</p> <p>We draw near to worship you. Draw near to us, make yourself known to us today – in all that we think, say and do. Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings</p> <p>John 6:51-58 <i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/song/video "Will you come and follow me" (Summons)</p>

Response

A man asked God, "What does a billion dollars mean to you who are all powerful?"

"Hardly a penny." God said.

Then the man asked God ,

"And what are a thousand centuries to you?"

God answered, "Hardly a second!!"

Thinking he had God backed into a corner, the man then said,

"Then if that's the case, O Lord, give me a penny !!"

"Sure," God replied. "In just a minute."

Wisdom isn't outsmarting God,

wisdom is living in and with God.

Wisdom is being in Christ and surrounded by Christ.

Wisdom is eating and drinking from the feast which God has prepared for us. ⁱⁱ

Bread suggests togetherness, care, and love, hopes and dreams, fun and adventure.

Eat this Bread and you will live, Jesus promises.

But even more than that,

eat this Bread and I will abide with you, and you will abide with me.

I like that word abide.

To abide is to know that no matter what comes our way,

we will not be deserted nor left to face whatever the matter is on our own.
Christ comes to live within us,
to take up residence in our spirits and promises not to leave.

Over the years,
we have witnessed many scenes of this abiding presence played out
in the lives of persons we have known.
None are more powerful, more moving, more meaningful
than the images which walk across our minds
of faithful spouses who care for each other to the very end.

"I will not leave you."

Finally, here is the unspoken presence of a Loving Friend
who calms our grieving spirit in the dark times of our lives.

"Those who eat my flesh? abide in me, and I in them (John 6:56, NRSV)."

In a world of fast food chains, of drive-through windows,
we are today offered a different food, the Bread of Life.
It is food for a hungry soul.
It is eternal food which, when you eat it,
satisfies the craving of your heart and opens your eyes
to see that all else is imitation and second rate.ⁱⁱⁱ

Larry M. Goodpaster, Like a Breath of Fresh Air, CSS Publishing Company
Let's say some new friends invite you to their house for a meal.

When you are a guest in their home,
they are sharing their intimacy with you.
They are sharing with you some of the privacy of that place
where they live every day, eat every day, love every day,
work on their problems, argue from time to time,
sleep and depart for work and pleasure and return for rest, every day.

After graciously receiving you,
they show you around their home in which they take deep pride.

Then you go to the dining room for the meal.

You find the table set with care,
the food exceptionally delicious,
and the conversation flows easily.

Simply put, it becomes a lovely evening and you leave feeling full in every way.

You enjoy bread from the kitchen, but much more.

You enjoy the bread of being graciously received,
the bread of informed and lively conversation,
and the bread of being in beautiful surroundings..

Magnify that thousands of times

and you begin to have a glimmer of what the church perceives Holy Communion to be.

In Holy Communion Jesus and "Bread of Life" are one.

In Holy Communion bread and wine are the elements that nurture faith in God.^{iv}

Imagine that on entering a church for the first time,

you heard the words of Jesus being read out declaring that,

'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life,

and I will raise them up on the last day;
 for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.'
 Would there be any chance of your returning next Sunday?

These words might have been a little easier to grasp
 for Jesus' audience on a hillside in Galilee,
 in an age and context so different from our own.
 His contemporaries were familiar with the idea of sacrifice
 and the spilling of blood.
 They were familiar with the idea of something
 that was as much about shared meals as about tradition and symbolism.
 But his invitation to 'eat my flesh' would have been a shock, even for them.

Within our own churches,
 our understanding of what happens when we celebrate Holy Communion
 may be something that we take for granted,
 but it could seem as alarming to newcomers as Jesus' first invitation.

It is, of course,
 meant as a way of expressing or allowing Jesus to be as close to us as food is,
 to achieve a complete 'oneness' with us.
 And the purpose of this 'all-consuming' relationship is for our benefit:
 to feed us with all that is essential to life.

Just as Paul wrote to the Ephesians
 that they are not to be filled with wine but with the Holy Spirit,
 so Jesus wants us to rely not on physical food alone,
 but to receive the nourishment of his life, his word.

We can all appreciate that some foods are more appetising than others,
 and we each have our own preferences.
 Have you ever felt bored with food
 and wished for a more varied diet,
 something new and tasty?
 The same will be true of our appetite for the Word,
 both in the way we worship together and in our private devotions.

In Jesus' time the faith of the Jews relied heavily on tradition,
 and perhaps had become dull and tasteless.
 Jesus offered them something new, exotic and even risky.

How is our appetite today?
 Is our spiritual diet balanced?
 Do we enjoy our meal of worship enough to invite others to the feast?

Amen

Hymn/song

TIS #552 – "Come, my way, my truth, my life"

TIS #717 – "Give thanks"

	Offering
	Notices
	<p>Prayers for all people</p> <p><i>Prayer from Rev Sharon Hollis, UCA President</i></p> <p>God of mercy and compassion, We pray for the world as across the globe we face the challenges of COVID. We give you thanks for those who care for the sick, for those who work on limiting the spread of the disease and those who develop and administer vaccines.</p> <p>We remember before you all those affected by COVID, Comfort those who mourn the death of a loved one, Heal those who have COVID-19 or suffer the long-term effects of having had COVID.</p> <p>Sustain those who work in health care, testing and vaccination. Encourage those who are supporting education remotely, Console those who must stay at home, And bless and protect those whose work is essential for our wellbeing.</p> <p>We long for a world where access to health care and vaccines are shared equitably Strengthen the efforts of those who work to end COVID for all. And fill us with a desire to work for justice and care for all. Amen^v</p> <p>We pray for people who struggle with their lives; for those for whom the chips are down and everything feels like an uphill struggle. We pray for all whose lives have been affected by tragedy. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.</p> <p>We pray for lawmakers and peacekeepers, as they seek to make the world a better place; for police, as they deal with challenging situations...</p> <p>We pray for the work of hospices, as they seek to bring a good end to life; for staff in care and nursing homes, who have the responsibility of looking after people who are no longer able to care for themselves...</p> <p>We pray for parents nurturing children; for teachers; and for the church's role in the nurture of the physically young and the spiritually young...</p>

	<p>We pray for people living with addictions; for organisations that seek to help them in their search for wholeness, and to bring normality back to their lives...</p> <p>We pray for ourselves, that we will make the most of our God-given time, and that we will live well and be thankful...</p>
	<p>Lord's Prayer</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #315 – "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord" TIS #738 – "Shout to the Lord" Zschech</p>
	<p>We are sent out After being fed by you, Jesus the living bread, send us out to feed others. Now that we are filled with your Holy Spirit, guide our hands as we offer your life to others. Now that we have the promise of eternal life with you, Lord God, give us your love to share with the world. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>

ⁱ [*Revised Common Lectionary*](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱ Traditional

ⁱⁱⁱ Larry M. Goodpaster, *Like a Breath of Fresh Air*, CSS Publishing Company

^{iv} Charles R. Leary, *Mission Ready!*, CSS Publishing Company

^v Prayer from Rev Sharon Hollis, UCA President