

Holy Eucharist

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 15B

August 15, 2021

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Prelude

Opening Hymn

Hymnal 420

When in our music God is glorified



1 When in our mu - sic God is glo - ri - fied, _____
2 How of - ten, mak - ing mu - sic, we have found _____
3 So has the Church, in lit - ur - gy and song, _____
5 Let ev - ery in - stru - ment be tuned for praise! _____



1 and a - dor - a - tion leaves no room for pride, _____
2 a new di - men - sion in the world of sound, _____
3 in faith and love, through cen - tu - ries of wrong, _____
5 Let all re - jice who have a voice to raise! _____



1 it is as though the whole cre - a - tion cried _____
2 as wor - ship moved us to a more pro - found _____
3 borne wit - ness to the truth in ev - ery tongue, _____
5 And may God give us faith to sing al - ways _____



— Al - le - lu - ia! — Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

All standing as they are able, the Officiant says

Blessed be God + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People

And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Officiant begins the Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you 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 Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The following is sung, all standing as they are able

Glory to God

Gloria in excelsis

8 Glo-ry to God in the high - estand

14 peace to God's peo - ple, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth. Lord God, heavenly

19 King, Al - mighty God and Fa - ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we

25 praise you for your glo - ry. Lord, Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the

31 Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God. You take a - way all the sin of the

36 world. Have mer - cy on us. You are seat - ed at the right hand of the

43 Fa - ther. Re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone are the

48 Ho - ly One. You a - lone are the Lord. You a - lone are the Most High—

51 Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the

glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men, A - men.

Collect of the Day

Officiant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Officiant Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us an offering for sin, and an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

First Reading

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

A Reading from the First book of Kings.

¹⁰David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ¹²So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

^{3:3}Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. ⁴The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so

numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. ¹⁴If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 111

¹Hallelujah!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, *
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²**Great are the deeds of the LORD! ***
they are studied by all who delight in them.

³God's work is full of majesty and splendor, *
and righteousness that endures for ever.

⁴**God's marvelous works are to be remembered; ***
the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.

⁵He gives food to those who fear him; *
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

⁶**The LORD has shown his people the power of his works ***
in giving them the lands of the nations.

⁷The works of God's hands are faithfulness and justice; *
all his commandments are sure.

⁸**They stand fast for ever and ever, ***
because they are done in truth and equity.

⁹The LORD sent redemption to his people,
and commanded his covenant for ever; *
holy and awesome is his Name.

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; ***
those who act accordingly have a good understanding;
God's praise endures for ever.

Second Reading

Ephesians 5:15-20

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Ephesus.

¹⁵Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.
People **Thanks be to God.**

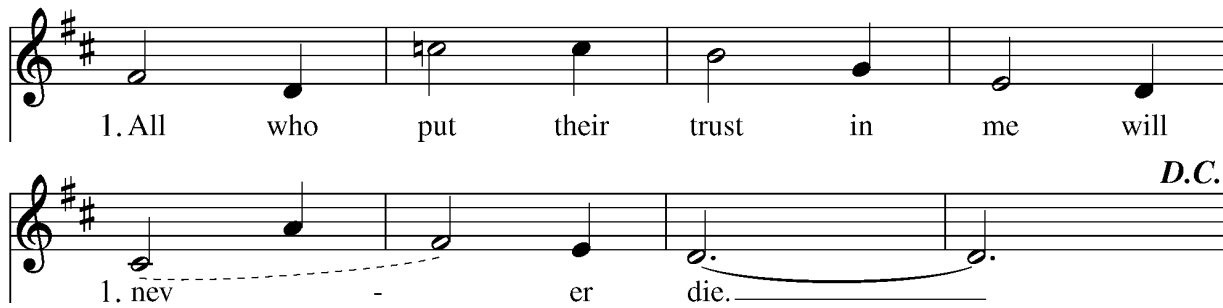
All stand as they are able.

Sequence Hymn

LEVAS 150

Jesus, the Bread of Life

Je - sus, the Bread of life, Je -
sus, the Bread of life. All who eat and
drink of Him will nev - er die,
will nev - er die. **Fine**
1. I am the Bread that came down from heav - en.
1. I will be your food.



Holy Gospel

John 6:51-58

All stand as they are able.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

[Jesus said,] ⁵¹“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

⁵²The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**



Sermon

Nicene Creed

All stand as they are able.

Officiant Let us affirm the faith of the Church using the words of the Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

All remain standing.

Officiant: We come to you, trusting that our prayers will be heard. So, we pray, O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Intercessor: For your church in our neighborhoods and around the world, may we work toward unity and pray with one heart and one voice. We pray for our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig, all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams, those in formation; and for our brothers and sisters worshipping at St John the Evangelist, Santo Domingo, and St Matthew's, Jalongo, in the Dominican Republic. We pray for wisdom for our leaders; for the president, the Congress, and the courts. O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We come to you with thankful hearts, thankful for friends, family, and food; thankful for work, play and peace. [We pray for _____.] Let us never forget those who are alone, hungry, out of work, and living in violent situations. O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We come to you on behalf of all who are in need of healing and peace [especially _____]. We give thanks for those in our community who provide care and comfort through long days and nights of pain. Make your presence known to those who are broken, lost, or grieving, and bring them the peace they seek. O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We come to you trusting in your care and claiming the promise of your presence. We pray for healing for those who are of special concern today: _____. O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

We come to you for hope, bringing before you those we love and see no longer [especially _____]. We rejoice that they now are free from all pain, and delight in the never-ending life that awaits us. O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Silence is kept.

Officiant: We come to you for forgiveness—for paying more attention to our own needs than the needs of others, for listening more to our own voice than we listen to yours, and for all the ways we put up barriers between your love and our lives. We come to you as disciples. May your love be known in the words we sing and say, and the lives we live as we walk in your way. O God of abundant mercy, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

Confession of Sin

All kneel as they are able.

A minister then says

Let us confess our sins to God.

A period of silence is observed.

Minister and People together say

**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.**

**We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

A Priest stands and says

Almighty God, who pardons all who truly repent, + forgive your sins, strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Peace

All stand as they are able.

Officiant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Announcements

Holy Communion

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.
Ephesians 5:2

The People then are seated.

How the Holy Communion is prepared

The Presider, other Eucharistic Ministers, and any participating Acolytes must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer, before celebrating and before distribution. Gloves will not be used.

The Presider alone will bring the bread and wine from the credence table to the Altar at the time of the offertory. All of the elements for Holy Communion will be placed on the Altar for the Eucharistic Prayer. The Presider alone stands at the altar, with others 6 feet or more away.

The **priest's wafer and chalice** will be uncovered in front of the Presider during the Eucharistic Prayer. They **are for the Presider alone**. They are consumed entirely by the Presider, or appropriately disposed of after the service.

The priest's wafer and the people's wafers will be kept separate at all times. The **people's wafers will be a container** on the Altar, which will remain covered throughout the Eucharistic Prayer.

During consecration, the Presider will touch the container, not the wafers.

The **distribution** of consecrated wine is not permitted at this time (as of June 19, 2020 Diocese of Michigan directive).

How the Holy Communion will be distributed

Everyone distributing communion will use hand sanitizer before they begin distribution. Gloves will not be used.

Communicants will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer before receiving. Hand sanitizer will be available at the service.

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The people will come to the Altar rail as they are able. The Minister will place the bread in the hand. The distribution will happen without directly touching the hand of the person receiving. Hand-to-mouth distribution is not permitted. If hand-to-hand contact happens, the minister will re-sanitize.

If a blessing is preferred, the blessing will be given without touch.

The people stand as they are able as a minister brings forward the alms basin.

Offertory Hymn

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.

The people remain standing.

The Officiant says

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

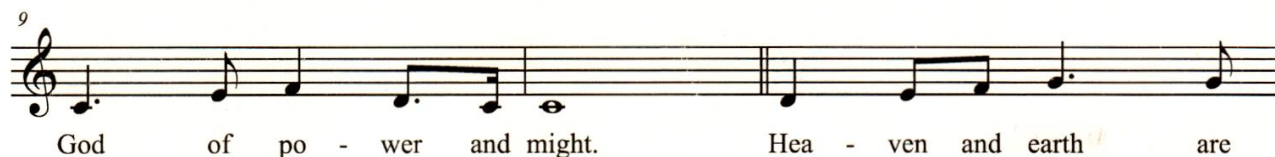
God of great and steadfast love, we thank and praise you
because you open your life that we may abide in you.

You called Abraham and made your home in the midst of the people
whom you had chosen, a great people,
so numerous they could not be numbered or counted.

In Jesus, son of David, you walked before us in faithfulness,
in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart.

You crowned him king and ushered in a reign that has no end;
and in your grace you invite us to gather around his heavenly throne,
joining all the company of heaven, singing your unending hymn of glory.

Sanctus



15


 hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, ho -

18


 san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

24


 Bles-sed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.

The Officiant continues

Ever-present God, through meals you show your people
 your faithfulness in the wilderness, your persistence in times of famine,
 and your will to be our companion forever.

Your Son shared a meal the night before he died for our salvation,
 and on the day he rose for our redemption.

Send your Holy Spirit + on your people, that those who eat the flesh
 of your Son and drink his blood may have eternal life.

Sanctify + this bread and this wine,
 that they may be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, at the table with his disciples, took bread,
 gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying,

"Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

After they had eaten, he took the cup.
 Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

"Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant,
 which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
 Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

The Officiant continues

Steadfast God, you offered your servant Solomon any gift he needed to take up the mantle of leading your people. When he chose an understanding mind, able to discern between good and evil, you gave him also those things for which he had not asked.

You bestow on us so much more than we desire or deserve.
Send upon your people the gift of wisdom, that your children may know the paths that lead to peace, your church may be renewed in the ways of gentleness, and your kingdom may come near in grace and truth.

Build up rulers and leaders in the virtues of discernment and mercy. Show your face to those who ache for your overturning day of reversal, and hasten the coming of your just and righteous reign, Triune God, now and forever. **AMEN.**

The Officiant then says

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

The Officiant says

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Officiant says

Christ makes himself known to us
in the breaking of bread.

**He offers us his body broken for our sake
and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.**

We accept his promises and gifts
and depend on his life to sustain ours.

**In turn we offer ourselves in thanksgiving
to the risen Lord who has conquered death.**

So we celebrate his victory here and now
and anticipate the joyous feast in his coming kingdom.

**United around this sacrament,
we receive strength and courage
to continue our pilgrimage with God in the world.**

The Presider continues

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, those who are not physically present here join us in offering you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your resurrection; we await your coming in glory. And since they cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into their hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us all with your grace, Lord Jesus, and never let us be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

All baptized persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

After Communion, the Officiant says

Let us pray.

God of abundance, you have fed us
with the bread of life and cup of salvation;
you have united us
with Christ and one another;
and you have made us one
with all your people in heaven and on earth.

**Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit,
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world
and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

Go into the world, and know how much a tired and hurting world needs your strength and gladness. For there are deeds of compassion and courage that will never be done, unless you do them; and words of hope and healing that will never be spoken, unless you speak them.

And may God's blessing + be with you,
Christ's peace be with you,
the Spirit's outpouring be with you, now and always. **Amen**

Closing Hymn

Chorus Book 139

Each moment with you

The musical score is written in 6/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system has a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains the melody with lyrics: "1. We trea - sure these mo - ments, These mo - ments to -" and "2. We trea - sure each mo - ment, Each mo - ment to -". The bass staff provides harmonic accompaniment. Chords are indicated above the staff: F, F⁴/₂, F, G^m/_{B^b}, B^b, G^m⁷, C, D^m/_C, C⁷. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff lyrics are: "geth - er. With all Your chil - dren," and "geth - er. As You go with us". The bass staff continues the accompaniment. Chords are indicated above the staff: B^b/_F, F, B^b, B^b^{#4}/₂, B^b, C.

C C7 C9 C6 F E^{sus} G E F E^{sus} F A

_____ We sing Your praise. _____ For You _____ have
 _____ through-out the day. _____ In ev - 'ry

B \flat B \flat M7 C C7 B \flat A m A C \sharp C \sharp 7

come in love and grace. With joy _____ we wor - ship face to
 prob - lem You are there. You fill _____ our lives with praise and

D m D m C E C E \sharp C E C G m B \flat

face. _____ We trea - sure these mo - ments,
 prayer. _____

G m G m 7 C7 C \sharp 7^{sus} C7 F

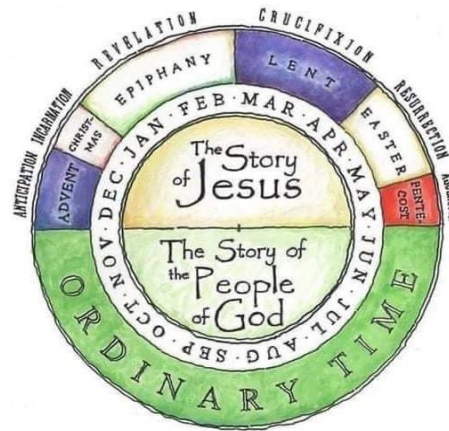
_____ these mo - ments with You. _____

Dismissal

Minister And now, my siblings in Christ, I bid you go in peace to love and serve our Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude



Upcoming Commemorations

- August 15 Mary the Virgin, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ
- 17 Samuel Johnson, 1772, Timothy Cutler, 1765,
and Thomas Bradbury Chandler, 1790, Priests; and,
Baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare, 1587
- 18 William Porcher DuBose, Priest, 1918; and, Artemisia Bowden, 1969
- 20 Bernard of Clairvaux, Monastic and Theologian, 1153

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OFFERING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in Action is continuing to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They are in need of our continuing help. **The usual "TOP ITEMS" needed are:** baked beans, coffee, canned tomatoes, hamburger helper (or any helper), spaghetti sauce, small cans Campbell's soup, ketchup, ranch dressing, cereal, 64oz fruit juices, chips, crackers, toilet paper, laundry soap, cleaning products. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food Drive at the church will September 19**. Please leave your donations at the church on that day.

Financial donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at www.faithinaction1.org, by [Facebook](#), or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action*, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118. **If you need help, please call FIA at (734) 475-3305**



Pentecost Proper 15B August 15, 2021

1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14

God writes straight with crooked lines, and Solomon certainly was a crooked line! Our reading today presents the idealized Solomon – humble, righteous, and God-fearing. After all, he is concerned foremost about serving God and being a wise ruler. But the context of our reading reveals that Solomon was a complicated man, with a but qualified love for God. The three verses preceding our lection remind us that Solomon brought a foreign wife to Jerusalem and worshipped at “high places” in violation of the Law, and first built a house for himself before building one for God. Subsequent history witnesses Solomon’s oppressive rule resulting in a split between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Rather than holding Solomon as a role model, we might interpret this narrative as an invitation to reflect upon God’s call to the imperfect, to the undeserving, and the flawed – in other words, to each of us. This is the mystery and miracle of God’s grace – we can’t do anything to become worthy of it but open our hearts and say yes to this gracious gift.

- How have you experienced God’s grace through your flaws and imperfections?

Psalm 111

Our psalm takes the form of a beautifully creative acrostic poem – each line begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Within this literary architecture are timeless words of wisdom that nurture and nourish us on our journey toward holiness. The poet’s themes include the following, all evocative of the exodus and Sinai experience – God initiates relationship with us through gracious action, we are called to respond in gratitude; we praise God both in formal liturgy and also in our way of living; “fear of the Lord” is authentic knowledge, the key to a fruitful life.

Notice that “fear of the Lord” is placed in the middle of the text (for ancient authors the most important place) and the final verse. Our attention is drawn to this phrase, the foundation of all wisdom teaching. To fear the Lord is to acknowledge that there is a God, and I am not it, and I am ready to submit myself to God’s instruction. Psalm 111 invites us to recall what God has done for our ancestors and wants to graciously do for us, yet God patiently awaits our “yes”.

- How are you being called to a deeper sense of “fear of the Lord”?

Ephesians 5:15-20

We have a great turn of phrase in our reading - “Making the most of the time because the days are evil.” Literally in Greek, “redeeming the time.” “Evil days” probably was a reference to the expected apocalypse, but we can reinterpret the phrase as a comment on our historical moment. How are we being called to “redeem the time” during these days of evil?

Each of us and our communities must answer this question for ourselves; our verses from Ephesians can serve as inspiration. Let’s briefly look at a few key themes that touch on some core Christian theological concepts. First, “Paul” underscores that Christian faith is *communal*. One cannot alone be a disciple of Jesus. Christian anthropology doesn’t allow for a solitary faith. Bishop Desmond Tutu put it this way: “It is not ‘I think therefore I am.’ It is rather, ‘I am human because I belong. I participate. I share.’”

Second, Christians live with boundaries. We submit ourselves to a discipline characterized by self-control. The author implies a two-fold point in his warning about drinking wine – this harms the body of the individual but also the corporate body. In other words, one’s actions have consequences not only for the individual.

Third, note that our passage begins with a mention of wisdom and ends with a mention of the Spirit. Being “filled with the Spirit” can be interpreted as learning the ways of Wisdom. In the Hebrew Bible, the terms “wisdom,” “word,” and “Spirit” were interchangeable. This inspiration bears fruit in harmonious living with others in our communities, which our author symbolizes with images of singing, playing, and addressing one another in psalms.

- What challenges from our culture face the Christian notions of community, boundaries, and living in the Spirit of Wisdom?

John 6:51-58

On one level, this week’s Gospel is about the Eucharist. On another, our verses could be interpreted as a commentary on being part of the Christian community. I’d like to focus on this latter approach. Let’s consider the Greek word John chose to use for “flesh” – *sarx*.

In the New Testament, *sarx* is usually (but not always) used in a negative way. “Flesh” is often a metaphor for selfishness or actions done apart from the wisdom and guidance of God. *Sarx* also refers to the soft, ephemeral, mortal, corruptible aspect of the human being. Interestingly, John could have used another word – *soma* – usually translated as “body.” In the New Testament, this term is used to describe the resurrected, glorified body of Jesus, and the redeemed body of the Christian. *Soma* carries a positive connotation. So why did John choose *sarx* over *soma*?

Scripture uses the phrase “body of Christ” in three distinct ways – Jesus’ physical body, the Eucharist, and the body of believers. *Soma* is an appropriate word for the first two, but I suggest that *sarx* is fitting for the third. To follow Jesus is to be a part of a community, and we know that this is no easy task. Communities are messy, difficult, corruptible, dysfunctional, and sometimes (like our fleshy bodies) they stink! But if we’re going to have the “life” Jesus is talking about, we need to be nourished with his flesh, the community. We have to learn to eat this flesh and drink this blood. This is indeed a hard teaching, and it is the reason that many turn away (I know many times I have been tempted to “spit out” this food and drink!).

Finally, we might also hear in Jesus’ teaching to “eat [his] flesh” a call to be a nourishing, nurturing community, not junk food. Jesus needs us to cooperate with his grace so that we, his body, can be *life* for those who feed on him.

- How can we as a community be true food and drink for each other and the world?

This study was written by Brian B. Pinter

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Confession from *Enriching our worship*, p.19 **Postcommunion prayer**, p.69; **Blessing**, p.71.

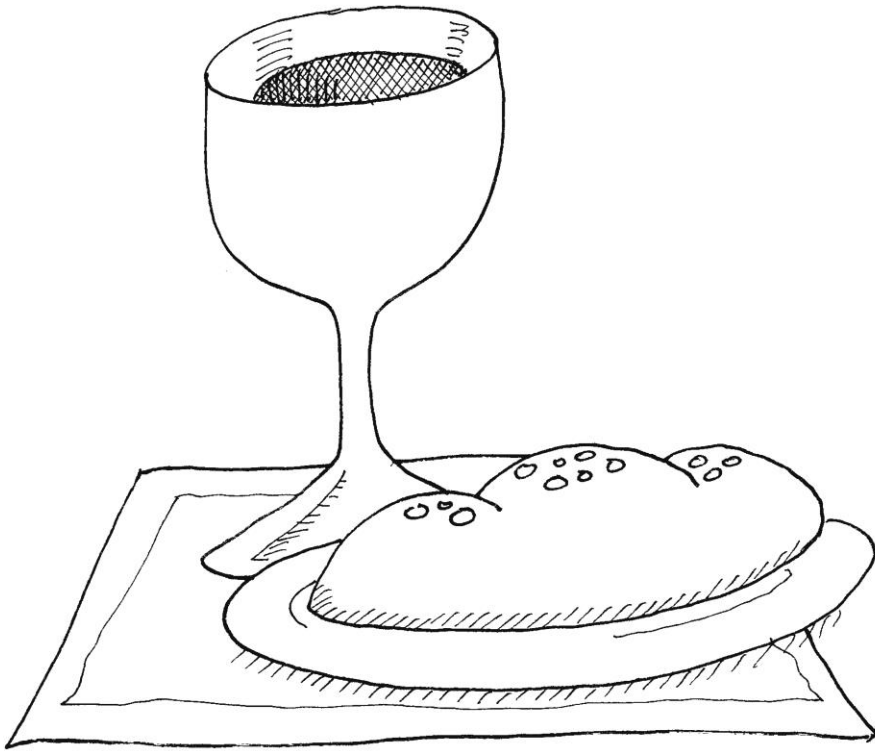
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Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ,
and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world,
guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.

'The one who eats
this bread will
live forever.' JOHN 6:58



St Barnabas Episcopal Church
20500 West Old US-12
Chelsea MI 48118
stbarnabaschelsea.org