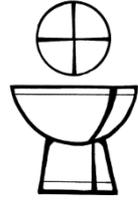


9:00 A.M., SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2021

In today's gospel many people take offense at Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood; even many of Jesus' disciples peel off. This is the backdrop in John's gospel for Peter's confession of faith. "To whom can we go?" asks Peter, in words we sometimes sing just before the gospel is read. "You have the words of eternal life." In order to take such a stand, as Peter and Joshua did, Paul tells us to arm ourselves with the word of God. We pray in the Spirit that we might be bold ambassadors of the gospel.



Welcome to guests and visitors! *This pamphlet will guide your worship today. The assembly's parts are indicated by ☒ and bold font. The vertical line in the left margin indicates when the assembly stands as each is able.*

About Holy Communion with Saint John Lutheran Church: "It is taught that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper and are distributed and received there" (Augsburg Confession, Article X)· "A person who has faith in these words, 'given for you' and 'shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,' is really worthy and well prepared." "Forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament" (The Small Catechism, Part VI)· "This church practices Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to Communion" (The Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 50)·

Following the introductory verses, a welcome is made.

CONFESSIO AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

☒ Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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☞ Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

☞ 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.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

☞ Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *As We Gather at Your Table* (ELW # 522)

**1 As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's vict'ry known.**

2 Turn our worship into witness

in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.

3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.

GREETING

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

☩ And also with you.

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of
God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.

☩ Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

☩ Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

☩ And also with you.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

☩ Amen.

FIRST READING: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ^{2a}And Joshua said to all the people, ¹⁴“Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

¹⁶Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; ¹⁷for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”

The word of the Lord.

☩ Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY: Psalm 34:15-22

¹⁵The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.

☩ ¹⁶The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

¹⁷The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them and delivers them from all their troubles.

☒ ¹⁸The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and will save those whose spirits are crushed.

¹⁹Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver him out of them all.

☒ ²⁰He will keep safe all his bones; not one of them shall be broken.

²¹Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

☒ ²²The Lord ransoms the life of his servants, and none will be punished who trust in him.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

The word of the Lord.

☒ Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,

☩ to declare your steadfast love in the morning,

to the music of the lute and the harp;

☩ For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work.

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

☩ You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: John 6:56-69

The holy gospel according to John.

☩ Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said, ⁵⁶“Those 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.” ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

The gospel of the Lord.

☩ Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Silence for reflection may follow the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Blessed Assurance* (ELW # 638)

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. *Refrain*

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. *Refrain*

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

☒ **And also with you.**

The assembly remains in place, as the service continues.

APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us God's people through our baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

☒ **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

Each petition ends: Lord, in your mercy,

☩ hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray . . . through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

☩ Amen.

OFFERING PRESENTATION

Offerings are received at the door as one enters. The offering is presented for the work of Christ's Church, here and throughout the world. The following is sung during the presentation.

OFFERTORY SONG: *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful* (ELW # 184)

☩ Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and the dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer.
Grace our table with your presence,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

At the conclusion, the assembly responds:

☩ Amen.

The table is set.

DIALOGUE

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.

PREFACE

The minister continues, concluding: ... and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS: Holy, Holy, Holy (ELW p. 153)

☒ Holy, holy, holy Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. . . .

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

☒ Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

☒ 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 forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

☞ Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION SONG: *Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)* (ELW p. 154)

**☞ Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Please remain seated where you are. The communion elements will be brought to you. The host is received in your open hand. The wine is received by individual glass, taken from by you the offered tray. Carefully place your empty glass in the pickup tray.

BLESSING & POST-COMMUNION PSALM (104)

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

☞ Amen.

Bless the Lord, O my soul;

☞ O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness!

You are clothed with majesty and splendor.

☞ You wrap yourself with light as with a cloak.

Man goes forth to his work

☞ and to his labor until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are your works!

**☞ In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.**

You send forth your Spirit, and they are created;

☞ and so you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;

☞ may the Lord rejoice in all his works.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;

☞ I will praise my God while I have my being.

May these words of mine please him;

☞ I will rejoice in the Lord.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

☞ as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

At the conclusion, the assembly responds:

☞ Amen.

BLESSING

Response after the blessing:

☞ Amen.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please check web-sites and printed materials for further information.

SENDING SONG: *O Living Bread from Heaven* (ELW # 542)

1 O living Bread from heaven, how well you feed your guest!

The gifts that you have given have filled my heart with rest.

O wondrous food of blessing! O cup that heals our woes!

My heart, this gift possessing, in thankful song o'er flows.

2 My Savior, you have led me within your holiest place,

and here yourself have fed me with treasures of your grace;

for you have freely given what earth could never buy,

the bread of life from heaven, that now I shall not die.

**3 You gave me all I wanted; this food can death destroy.
And you have freely granted the cup of endless joy.
My Lord, I do not merit the favor you have shown;
and all my soul and spirit bow down before your throne.**

**4 Oh, grant me then, well-strengthened with heav'nly food, while here
my course on earth is lengthened, to serve you, free from fear;
and bring me home to praise you where none can peace destroy,
where I will ever raise you glad songs in endless joy.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

☞ Thanks be to God.

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To Whom Can We Go?

The disciples following Jesus knew that he often had some rather unusual things to say about himself and about God, but in today's gospel, they feel that their teacher has gone too far: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them," Jesus proclaims (John 6:56). For Jesus' Jewish contemporaries, for whom consuming blood of any type was forbidden and who killed animals according to strict religious regulations, this statement was nothing short of sacrilegious. For everyone else, it was just ridiculous. "Whoever eats me will live because of me" (John 6:57). Say what? The scandal caused large numbers of Jesus' disciples to leave; after all, what sort of person would say such a thing?

Like the early disciples, we can find following Jesus baffling and difficult. Love our neighbors when they are so unlovable? Take sabbath rest when there's work to be done? Trust that this Jesus fellow really is God-become-human and was crucified, died, and *raised back to life*? When the culture tells us to speak our own truth, eat fewer carbs, build up our bank accounts, exercise more, buy a better day planner or a new car or more expensive laundry detergent, and lean into our own potential to optimize our lives, it can be tempting to take hold of the latest self-help gospel. It's so concrete. Trusting God instead of ourselves? How scandalous, how ridiculous. "I've got this," we prefer to say.

But hear Jesus' words in this week's gospel: "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless" (John 6:63). This is not a condemnation; it is a promise that the one who meets us at the table in bread, wine, flesh, and blood also sends his Spirit to give you life. May you hear that promise today and let the Holy Spirit draw from your lips the same confession as Peter: "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).