



**Midweek Service of Word and Prayer
Grace Lutheran Church
Lincoln, Nebraska**

Introduction to Sunday

This Sunday is the first of five gospel readings from John 6, the first four of which focus on Jesus as bread of life. Today Jesus feeds thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. What we have, what we bring to Jesus' table, seems like it is not nearly enough to meet all the needs we see around us. But it is not the adequacy of our supplies or our skills that finally makes the difference: it is the power of Jesus working in the littlest and least to transform this world into the world God desires, a world where all the hungry are satisfied. So, how do you see this world being revealed this week?

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.**

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, you have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth. Grant that we may know your Son to be the true bread of heaven and share this bread with all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

2 Kings 4

44He (the servant) set it (the food) before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

Where do you see God's generosity at work in our world today?

Psalms 145

16You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Where do you see God's hand at work in our world today?

Ephesians 3

18I pray that you...know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

How is God filling your life today?

John 6

12When they were satisfied, he (Jesus) told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost."

What can you do with your "left-overs" to better serve God and care for creation?

Reflection

Rollin' in the Dough—and Fishes

In recent years many books have been printed that focus on baking vast assortments of breads—from rye to pumpernickel, French to Italian. Today, however, we encounter a bread that points to both a deeper longing, physically and spiritually, and an even more fulfilling outcome than the tastiest assortment of baked bread.

This abundance of the bread of life not only satisfies hunger, but it also transforms lives, and ushers in a new vision of a holy in community where God is fully present. We are invited into a conversation that might start by reflecting on a sentence written by a former United Nations Secretary General who said “Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and give back.”

The scriptures for this Sunday open a door for us to think about how individuals and communities are nourished and sustained by God, and imagine how we become vessels of the holy who are now open to the call of service. How might ordinary gifts and ordinary people become the ways God’s love and mercy are multiplied in sustenance for neighbor, community, and world?

Through our questions, our acts of giving, and our proclamation of the works of God in Christ Jesus, we are invited to experience what it means to be rooted in God’s sustaining love and to proclaim this God who invites us into the unimaginable vision of abundance.

Lord’s Prayer (together)

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.

Apostle’s Creed (together)

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 to the living, 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.

Responsive Prayer

Show us your mercy, O God,

and grant us your salvation.

Give us the joy of your saving help again,

and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

Give peace in all the world;

for only in you can we live in safety.

Keep the nations under your care,

and guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth;

your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy be forgotten,

nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us a clean heart, O God,

and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear my prayer,

and let my cry come before you.

Closing Prayer

O God, in you we live and move and have our being. Guide and govern us every day by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but remember that always we are walking in your promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing

Almighty God (+) bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**