

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A CITY-WIDE CHURCH WITH A WORLD-WIDE MINISTRY

Olaf Roynesdal, Senior Pastor
Shari Duminy, Associate Pastor
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2650 Farnam Street
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www.kmlchurch.org

July 25, 2021

9:00 AM

NINTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST



Today is the first of five Sundays with 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.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Father, † Son and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P God our provider,

C help us we pray.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

We question your ways when they differ from our ways.

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

Share with us the words of eternal life

and feed us for life in the world. Amen.

P Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, † the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

C Amen.

- 1 Come! Live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God.**

Refrain

**We are called to act with justice,
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.**

- 2 Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless
so hatred and blindness will be no more.**

Refrain

- 3 Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other
as sisters and brothers united in love.**

Refrain

Text: David Haas, b. 1957; Music: David Haas
Text and music © 1988 GIA Publications, Inc.

APOSTOLIC 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.

WORD

(sit)

FIRST READING

2 Kings 4:42-44

Today's reading is part of a larger section of 2 Kings that describes the miracles of Elisha, the successor to Elijah. Here the prophet gives food to a hungry crowd. Though there is not enough food to go around, Elisha trusts God, who provides enough and even more to satisfy the need.

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to Elisha, the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, "Give it to the people and let them eat."⁴³ But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" So he repeated, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.'"⁴⁴ He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

☐ The word of the Lord.

☑ Thanks be to God.

PSALM 145:10-18 (read responsively)

¹⁰All your works shall praise you, O LORD,
and your faithful ones shall bless you.

¹¹**They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your power,**

¹²that all people may know of your power
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout all ages.
You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.**

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD,
and you give them their food in due season.**

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

¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways
and loving in all your works.**

¹⁸You are near to all who call upon you,
to all who call upon you faithfully.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 3:14-21

We have been rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, which surpasses all human knowledge. Because Christ dwells in our hearts, our lives are continuously strengthened and empowered by the ongoing presence of the Spirit.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.



Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

C Glory to you, O Lord!

HOLY GOSPEL

John 6:1-21

In John's gospel, the miracles of Jesus are called "signs," because they reveal the true character of God. As such, they remain within the mystery of God and cannot be brought under human control..

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ Praise to you, O Christ.

(sit)

CHILDREN'S BLESSING

SERMON

Pastor Duminy

(stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”

ELW 674

**1 Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.**

Refrain

**Jesus lives again,
earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth
can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

**2 Christ is able to make us one,
at the table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.**

Refrain

**3 Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God (Immanuel) ev'rywhere!**

Refrain

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

Text © 1975 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188.

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

**☐ God has made us his 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.**

YOUTH TRIP BLESSING AND COMMISSIONING

- ☐ At this time, we invite the participants of the Youth Ministry trip on July 31st – August 7th to come forward for a commissioning and blessing.

*(Youth: Neely Edwards, Torin Edwards, Brooks Hinrichs, Mia Valquier, Jacob Weiland
Adults: Todd Weiland, Pastor Shari Duminy)*

At your baptism, you were claimed by God, and promises were made on your behalf. At your confirmation, you claimed your faith as your own and made promises yourself. Hear again the promises you made:

- To live among God’s faithful people,
- To hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper,
- To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through words and deed,
- To serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
- To strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

As we send you to Tulsa, Oklahoma for the 2021 Youth Mission trip to live out your baptism and these promises. Before God and the witness of this assembly, do you promise to be faithful to your baptismal vows and to care for all who you encounter in a manner fitting of a disciple of Jesus Christ? If so, say “**We do, with God’s help.**”

And people of God: do you promise to pray for our youth and those who accompany them, that they may be sustained with our love and care and be gifted with the fellowship, love, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit? If so, say “**We do, with God’s help.**”

☐ The Lord be with you.

☑ **And also with you.**

☐ Let us pray; Gracious God:

We ask you to grant peace to those attending the Youth Mission Trip and to bless them, form them by your hand, guide them by your Word, renew them by your Spirit, protect them as they travel, make their ways safe, and their homecomings joyful.

God has looked with favor on this community and God has blessed us through the lives of these young people.

As they have been a blessing to us, so now we send them forth as missionaries to the larger church, to be a blessing to others, in the name of the Father, the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

☑ **Amen.**

P Go now in the peace and joy of Christ, to put your faith into action.

C Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Response: **P** Lord, in your mercy,
C hear our prayer.

(In our prayers today, during a time of silence, pray for those listed below and for others according to their needs)

Illness: Richard Bock, Don Burton, Carol Duncan, Mike Edris, Rodney Edwards, Richard Holzer, Rik Hooper, Renee Johnson, Mark Kidder, Jason Klonglan, Marcie Lafleur, Chris Meyer, Mary Olson, David Penning, Toby Rees, Gary Rodene, Sheri Tipton, Tucker Family, relatives of Debbie Robinson, John Waterman, Darlene White

Other Prayers: *Those serving in the military* – Amy Dyer, Wyatt Johnson, Josh Kropenske, Michael McNeill, Daniel Milstead, Cody Ray, Sheldon Skovgaard, Michael Vutov, Joel Woosley

Other Prayers: *Those serving in mission* – Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, India; Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson, Tanzania; Rev. Rachel Ringlaben, Argentina; Meghan Brown Saavedra, Mexico; and Dan & Ginny Rath, international translators

Other Prayers: *Seminarians*—Adam Klinker, Katie Larson, Giselle Loucks, Justin Perkins

WE SHARE GOD’S PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

MEAL

(sit)

THE OFFERING IS RECEIVED

Please Support the overall ministry of Kountze Memorial during these difficult times. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to participate in this portion of worship. If you would like, use the QR code scanner on your smart phone to give online. If you are able, please mail in your offering or donate on-line. Thank you!



MUSICAL OFFERING

“Panis Angelicus”

César Franck (1822-1890)

Barb Carlsen, *soloist*

Latin Text:

Panis Angelicus fit panis hominum
Dat panis coelicus figuris terminum
O res mirabilis! Manducat Dominum
Pauper, pauper, servus et humilis
Pauper, pauper, servus et humilis

English:

The angel's bread becomes the bread of men
The heavenly bread ends all symbols
Oh, miraculous thing!
The body of the Lord will nourish
The poor, poor, and humble servant
The poor, poor, and humble servant

THE TABLE IS PREPARED

(stand)

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”

ELW 184

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

- ☐ Jesus, Bread of life,
- ☑ you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the lyrics 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.' The second staff contains 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff contains 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' The fourth staff contains 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The music consists of a single melodic line with various note values and rests, including a double bar line in the middle of each staff.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS IN PENTECOST

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the lyrics 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,'. The second staff contains 'heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.' The third staff contains 'Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes'. The fourth staff contains 'in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.' The music consists of a single melodic line with various note values and rests, including a double bar line at the end of the fourth staff.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us all to pray:

C **Our Father, who art in heaven,**
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.

C Come!

THE DISTRIBUTION

All baptized Christians who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and his Real Presence in, with and under the bread and wine, are welcome to the Lord's Supper. We believe that this is the Lord's table and is he who invites you. So you who are strong in faith, come with gratitude. You feel weak in faith, come to be strengthened. And you who feel you have no faith, come so that the God of steadfast love will touch your heart with hope and joy.

Gluten free bread is available; simply request it.

AGNUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**1 Lord, take my hand and lead me
upon life's way;
direct, protect, and feed me
from day to day.
Without your grace and favor
I go astray;
so take my hand, O Savior,
and lead the way.**

**2 Lord, when the tempest rages,
I need not fear;
for you, the Rock of Ages,
are always near.
Close by your side abiding,
I fear no foe,
for when your hand is guiding,
in peace I go.**

**3 Lord, when the shadows lengthen
and night has come,
I know that you will strengthen
my steps toward home,
then nothing can impede me,
O blessed Friend!
So, take my hand and lead me
unto the end.**

Text: Julie von Hausmann, 1825-1901; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

“Break Now the Bread of Life”

ELW 515

**1 Break now the bread of life,
dear Lord, to me,
as once you broke the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page
I seek you, Lord;
my spirit waits for you,
O living Word.**

**2 Bless your own word of truth,
dear Lord, to me,
as when you blessed the bread by Galilee.
Then shall all bondage cease,
all fetters fall;
and I shall find my peace,
my All-in-All!**

**3 You are the bread of life,
dear Lord, to me,
your holy word the truth that rescues me.
Give me to eat and live
with you above;
teach me to love your truth,
for you are love.**

Text: Mary A. Lathbury, 1841-1913, alt.

- 1 Praise and thanksgiving, God, we would offer
for all things living, you have made good:
harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard,
hay from the mown fields, blossom and wood.**
- 2 God, bless the labor we bring to serve you,
that with our neighbor we may be fed.
Sowing or tilling, we would work with you,
harvesting, milling for daily bread.**
- 3 Father, providing food for your children,
by Wisdom's guiding teach us to share
one with another, so that, rejoicing
with us, all others may know your care.**
- 4 Then will your blessing reach ev'ry people,
freely confessing your gracious hand.
Where you are reigning, no one will hunger;
your love sustaining showers the land.**

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901-1984, alt.
Text © Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

(stand)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- P** Jesus, Bread of life,
- C** **we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have
nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In
your name we pray. Amen.**

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SENDING

BLESSING

☞ The blessing of the Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son and Holy Spirit be upon you now and forever.

THREE-FOLD AMEN

HYMN

“Jesus, Priceless Treasure”

ELW 775

- 1 Jesus, priceless treasure,
source of purest pleasure,
truest friend to me:
ah, how long I've panted,
and my heart has fainted,
thirsting, Lord, for thee!
Thine I am, O spotless Lamb;
nothing in this world can hide thee,
naught I ask beside thee.
- 2 In thine arm I rest me;
foes who would molest me
cannot reach me here.
Though the earth be shaking,
every heart be quaking,
Jesus calms my fear.
Lightnings flash and thunders crash;
yet, though sin and hell assail me,
Jesus will not fail me.
- 3 Hence, all fears and sadness,
for the Lord of gladness,
Jesus, enters in.
God, who dearly loves us,
from all trial saves us,
gives sweet peace within.
I have borne this worldly scorn;
still in thee lies purest pleasure:
Jesus, priceless treasure!

Text: Johann Franck, 1618-1677;
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

DISMISSAL

- ☞ Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.
☞ Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

✠ ✠ ✠

Special Notice

Reservations not required
Vaccinated—Masks optional
Not vaccinated—Masks required
Please maintain a minimum of 3 feet
between non-family members

You may still join us for Worship on Cox
channel 13 or live streamed at [https://
www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/](https://www.kmlchurch.org/live-streaming/)



KOUNTZE

Memorial Lutheran Church

2650 Farnam Street
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Omaha, NE 68131
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July 24 & 25, 2021

Kountze Food Pantry

Volunteers Needed:

Mondays, 7:30 - 9 AM, 9 - 11 AM, 11 AM - 1 PM

Fridays, 4 - 7 PM

If you are able to volunteer, please sign up by using the
link below:

<https://form.jotform.com/200834787701155>

The Kountze Food Pantry is pleased to announce we have
received our second \$1,000.00 from Family Fare receipts!
Please keep them coming! The toilet paper donations from
the congregation have been very generous. Our guests are
extremely grateful for all the full-sized hygiene items and
the tissue. With rising prices, your continued
contributions will be all the more important and
appreciated.

CJH Quilt Auction

Saturday, July 31

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

The day promises good food, great fun, and lots of
beautiful quilts donated by friends of camp. The auction
and lunch will be held rain or shine. Bring your friends
and families! If you have questions, contact Heather
at HAbbott@NLOM.org or 402-944-2544. Check out
CJHCenter.org/quilt-auction to see the quilts, including the

quilts our Kountze sewing group has donated.

The 11:00 AM service will return in August!

We will still be broadcasting our 9:00 AM Worship Service
on Cox Cable Channel 13 and live streaming on our
website.

Volunteer at the ELCA Youth Gathering

July 24-28, 2022

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Volunteer opportunities for the ELCA Youth Gathering are
available for individuals age 19 and older at the time of the
Gathering. For more information, go to [elca.org/
gathering/volunteer](http://elca.org/gathering/volunteer)

Today at Kountze

Coffee Hour

Please feel free to stop for coffee in the Fellowship Hall
following service today. We need volunteers to help serve
coffee and cookies. If you can help, please contact Jim
Smejkal (402-341-7761 or jim@kmlchurch.org).

Holy Play

Ages 3 yrs - 6th grade

Sundays through August 29

10:15 - 11:00 AM

Children from 3 years to 6th grade are invited to join
Pastor Shari and the Middle and High School Youth in the
Kountze Green Space each Sunday (June 20 – August 29).
We will be playing games, singing songs, sharing a snack,
and getting to know each other better. Parents are
encouraged to share coffee time with others or join in the
fun!

Volunteers Needed

As we prepare to return to “normal,” we are in need of
volunteers. There are several volunteer opportunities here
at Kountze from Sunday breakfast help to Worship
Assistants, Choir members, Sunday School teachers, or
many others. If you would like to serve in this way, please
call the church office and we’ll get you to the right people
to answer any questions you might have.

Attendance and Giving

Saturday Attendance: 47

Sunday Attendance: 9:00: 137

Wednesday Attendance: 16

Total: 200

Streaming Attendance: 54

Cox Cable Attendance: 261

Pantry Guests Served: 733 (includes 298 children)

Medical Clinic Guests Served: 22

Offering 7/12:

\$14,088.00 (Regular) \$12,436.53 (Specials)

\$1,322.00 (Debt Reduction)

Offering 7/18:

\$10,542.00 (Regular) \$4,213.53 (Specials)

\$1,092.00 (Debt Reduction)

Jesus has a power people long to follow.

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 6:1-21	Jesus feeds the five thousand
Monday	2 Kings 4:42-44	Elisha feeds one hundred
Tuesday	Ephesians 3:14-21	Christ's love for us
Wednesday	Titus 3:1-11	Maintain good deeds
Thursday	1 Peter 1:8-17	Suffering for doing right
Friday	Ephesians 2:1-10	From death to life
Saturday	Psalms 145:10-18	The Lord is kind and merciful
Sunday	John 6:24-35	Christ, the bread of life



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Go to www.vibrantfaithathome.org for more faith-forming activities.

A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. **John 6:2 (NRSV)**

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty and living God, we thank you for the way you feed us, heal us, and care for us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Just as you fed the five thousand on a hillside, we thank you for feeding us and caring for us today. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of abundance bless you with more than you can imagine. (Ephesians 3:20)

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Tell or think about a time you have been glad to be part of a crowd.
- Have you ever been afraid when you were part of a large crowd? Explain.
- What are some reasons you like being part of the crowd that follows Jesus?

Read: John 6:1-21.

By the beginning of John 6, Jesus had taught, turned water into wine, healed, and challenged Jewish authorities. The throngs are growing and five thousand have followed him to a hillside. Jesus looks at them, sits them down on a large grassy area, and feeds them like a shepherd tending his flock. His actions remind people of what Elisha (2 Kings 4:42-44) did when he fed large crowds. Jesus being on a mountain side and having powers over the waters of the Sea of Galilee (v.19) reminds others of a role like Moses. It is clear that people are attracted to Jesus and he cares for them with a power that people long to see, long to touch, long to be with. That is the power that has been given to the church to speak and work for people today in Christ's name. Christ's power continues to be present today so that others may follow in the footsteps of the one who brings us healing, hope, and salvation. What have you experienced that makes you want to be a follower of Jesus?

Pray: **Dear Jesus, we thank you for coming into our world and our lives to care for us and to feed us with your love. Amen.**

Jesus fed the five thousand from just five small loaves and two fish. We know that today in the world many people live with limited food and constant hunger. Give money or volunteer time at your local food bank or other organizations that help those in need of food. Make a list of ways you can support people who do not have enough food.

Paul prays for the people, "*I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name*" (Ephesians 3:14-15). Prayer is a way to practice our faith. Think or talk about different ways to pray (standing, sitting, folded hands, kneeling). This week practice kneeling for prayer. *Pray:* **Dear God, I ask to be filled with your presence and to know the love of Christ that he may dwell in my heart forever and ever. Amen.**

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15; Psalm 78:23-29
Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:24-35**