

GAYLORD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
318 4th STREET, BOX 385, GAYLORD, MN, 55334
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost – Communion Sunday
August 2, 2020



MEDITATION

Seneca, 1st century

"There is no delight in owning anything unshared."

THE CALL

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

God is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
God is good to all, and God's compassion is over all that God has made.
God upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand to all, satisfying the desire of every living thing.
In every way God is just, and kind in every action.
God is near to all who call, to all who call on God in truth.
God fulfills the desire of all who fear God;
God also hears their cry, and saves them.
God watches over all who love God, but will destroy all the wicked.
My mouth will speak the praise of God, and all flesh will bless God's holy name forever and ever.

PRELUDE

KARI EVANS

WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE CHURCH

We will begin worshiping together on Sunday August 16th at 9:30 a.m. in the church building.

A list of safety precautions will be sent to you in the mail or via email. Masks are required. Personal distancing will be practiced in seating.

Worship services will be videoed on Sunday so internet access to services will not be available until Monday or Tuesday. Once the new video equipment is installed we will be able to stream live services on Sunday morning.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The day breaks

All: And God does not let us go.

One: The hour calls

All: And God does not let us go.

One: The evening falls

All: And God holds us fast.

One: Let us turn to God in worship

All: God, who never turns from us.

GATHERING HYMN:

"HOLY SPIRIT, EVER DWELLING"

NCH #59

**Holy Spirit, ever dwelling in the holiest realms of light;
Holy Spirit, ever brooding o'er a world of gloom and blight;
Holy Spirit, ever raising earth-bound souls to glory high;
Living, life-imparting Spirit: you we praise and magnify.**

**Holy Spirit, ever breathing on the church the breath of life;
Holy Spirit, ever striving through your people's ceaseless strife;
Holy Spirit, ever forming in the church the mind of Christ:
In our worship we will praise you for your fruit and gifts unpriced.**

**Holy Spirit, ever working through the church's ministry—
Quickening, strengthening, and absolving, setting captive sinners free;
Holy Spirit, ever binding age to age and soul to soul,
In community unending you we worship and extol.**

GATHERING PRAYER

One: God, you see us.

You see our struggles,

You see our difficulties.

All: You see our possibilities,

You see our promise.

One: Connect the dots for us, O God.

Soften the hard spots with your blessing.

All: Call us in our wandering to hear you say our names.

Satisfy our longings as with loaves and fishes and manna from heaven.

One: For you are a good God, a God present in the scramble,

And in the end, you always, always have a blessing.

All: For this and so much more,

we give you thanks, through Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 32:22-31, Matthew 14:13-21

Genesis 32:22-31

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Penuel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate

and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

SERMON

“SCARCITY OR ABUNDANCE”

PASTOR DENNIS

I heard of a couple who went to the fair and every year Morris would say, “I’d like to ride that helicopter.” And each year his spouse would reply, “I know Morris, but that ride is \$50. And \$50 is \$50. But one year they were at the fair, and Morris said, “I’m 85 years old. If don’t ride that helicopter now, I might never get another chance.” Again, his spouse replied that helicopter ride is \$50. And \$50 is \$50. Because they happened to be standing at the concession stand where the tickets were sold for the ride, the pilot of the helicopter happened to be standing there and overheard them. He said, “Excuse me for eavesdropping folks but I’ll make you a deal. I’ll take both of you up for a ride. And if you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don’t say a word, I won’t charge you a penny. But if you say one word, it is \$50.” They agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard from either of his passengers. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word. As they were landing, the pilot yelled back to Morris and said, “By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn’t. I’m impressed.” Morris replied, “Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when my spouse fell out.... but you know \$50 is \$50.”

Obviously not a positive example of a loving relationship, but isn’t it easy at times for all of us to buy in to an attitude of scarcity. Noted Old Testament professor says that we Americans actually believe more in a myth of scarcity than a myth of abundance. We either don’t have enough, aren’t making enough, or aren’t worth enough. Sometimes we think that we are not enough and so we think, “I can’t do that,” or “no one will believe me,” “If I do it I will fail,” or “What’s the use, it’s only going to get worse.” And other times we think we don’t have enough- that enough is not enough.” At these times we sound like John D. Rockefeller who when he lived was one of the wealthiest people of his time. But when a reporter asked him, “Mr. Rockefeller, how much is enough?” And he responded, “Just a little more than I have.” And this sense of scarcity for us is heightened for us by the advertising industry of our day. A study showed that on the average you and I are impacted by 3500 ads each day which try to tell us that we are not enough or that we don’t have enough, but if we just become a certain way or buy a certain product or get more stuff, these ads tells us that then we will be happier and better. We just need more and need to be more. And so, you see, it’s easy for all of us living today, to buy in to an attitude of scarcity (and fear.)

Well, an attitude of scarcity is what we find in the disciples in today’s gospel reading. Jesus has gone out to a deserted place and is followed by a vast crowd of people. There he teaches through the day, but as evening draws near the disciples are worried about what such a throng of people will do for supper. They tell Jesus that he should just dismiss the people so they can go into the villages to fend for themselves and get something there. But Jesus said, “No, there is no need to send the people away. You give them supper.” “We can’t,” they respond, “we do not have enough food. All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish.” Do you see how the disciples are viewing things through the lens of scarcity? “We can’t” they say, “we don’t have enough.”

But Jesus operated out of a sense of abundance. He looked at the same things the disciples looked at, but where they saw not enough, he saw plenty: plenty of food, plenty of time, plenty of possibilities with the resources at hand. And so, Jesus asks the crowd of people to take a seat on the grass. And then he takes the five loaves and two fish and lifts his face toward heaven and gives thanks for the little that they have and in that moment of gratitude, there was enough for everyone. And hopefully they all brought their Tupperware because there were even left-overs! A world of scarcity becomes a world of abundance.

This beautiful gospel story asserts that our life comes from a generous God who loves the world into being, and that our lives will end in God, and that this well-being cannot be taken from us. And all the way through our lives God promises: “My grace is sufficient- you are enough.” Our true value and

identity are found in God who said about each one of us in our baptism, “You are my beloved daughter. You are my beloved son.” And to our greed, when we think that enough is not enough and that we need more and more to be happy and fulfilled, God lovingly says “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you.”

One of my favorite authors is Parker Palmer. He is a wise Quaker writer. A few years ago, I attended a seminar where he told a story that has been much on my mind these days. Palmer was a passenger on a plane that suffered the fate some of us have experienced. The plane pulled away from the gate, taxied to the far corner of the airport, and just stopped. He could hear engines wind down, and his heart sank.

The pilot came on the intercom and said, “I have some bad news and some really bad news. The bad news is there’s a storm front in the west, Denver is socked in and shut down. We’ve look at the alternatives and there are none. So, we’ll be staying for a few hours. That’s the bad news. The really bad news is that we have no food and it’s lunch time.” Everybody groaned. This was back when the still served meals on airplanes. Some passengers started to complain, and some became angry. But then Palmer watched as one of the flight attendants did something remarkable.

She stood up and took the intercom and said, “We’re really sorry folks. We didn’t plan it this way and we really can’t do much about it. I know for some of you this is a big deal- you are really hungry or you have a medical condition and you need lunch. Some of you might not care one way or another and some of you need to skip lunch. So, I’m going to pass around a couple of breadbaskets and ask everybody to put something in the basket. Some of you brought a snack, something to tide you over, some you have a few LifeSavers or chewing gum or Roloids. And if you don’t have anything edible, you have a picture or your children or spouse or a bookmark or a business card. Everybody put something in and then we’ll reverse the process. We’ll pass the baskets around again and everyone can take out what he/she needs.

What happened, Palmer said, was amazing. “The griping stopped. People started to root around in pockets and handbags, some got up and opened their suitcases stored in the overhead luggage racks and got out boxes of candy, salami, a bottle of wine. People were laughing and talking. She had transformed a group of people who were so focused on all that they didn’t have into a world of abundance.

My friend, the world around us is feeling a good deal like the world of those airplane passengers when they first get the bad news. The bad news today is all too obvious. And like those passengers there’s not so much we can do about it, and it’s going to take patience and time. And today in our gospel we see that Jesus gave thanks for the little bit that they had and, in that moment of gratitude, there was enough for everyone.

When Parker Palmer was getting off the airplane after that flight he stopped and asked the flight attendant, “Do you know there’s a story in the Bible about what you did back there? It’s about Jesus feeding a lot of people with very little food.” “Yes,” she said, “I know that story. That’s why I did what I did.”

People of God we’ve heard the story once again today.
In Christ’s name, Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC

“AMAZING GRACE”

SHANNON HRUSKA

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader: Gracious God, who loves all and forgets none, we bring to you our prayers for all your children. Lord in your mercy,

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For the peace of the whole world, and for our salvation we pray. Lord in your mercy,
Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who continue to suffer with Covid-19 and those who have recovered, and those who have died, and those who grieve, may your grace and peace be with them. Lord in your mercy,
Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who continue to work on the front lines of the fight against the virus, we pray for health, strength, and your protection. Lord in your mercy,
Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who make decisions that affect and direct the ways of this nation and its people, we pray for integrity, loyalty and wisdom. Lord in your mercy,
Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For our church and the church worldwide, we pray for perseverance in this time of trial and challenge. Lord in your mercy,
Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who long for health, companionship, strength, direction, and healing, we pray for your presence to surround them and grant them the desires of their hearts. Lord in your mercy,
Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: And for all your beloved people, O God, we pray for unity, compassion, and understanding as we live in relationship with one another. May we all pray in one voice as we share the prayer of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

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. Amen.

THREE FOLD AMEN

AMEN. AMEN. A-A-A-AMEN.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

When resources were short, did Christ worry?
No! Christ saw the gifts, and Christ multiplied them!
This is the miracle we witness every time we give to the church.
God will take what we have, and God will do good things with it.

DEDICATION

ONE: God of increase and bounty, Source of all good things:
we offer these gifts as a portion of that which you have given us.
May these gifts be as loaves and fishes for those who find themselves
in poverty or hunger.

**All: May this act of giving bring about change:
change in our lives,
change in the lives we touch,
change in the systems that harm.**

One: Through Christ, who gave so much to save. **Amen.**

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION



CONFESSION

One: God is present to us, but we don't always feel it.
God is good to us, but we can't always accept it.
Fact is, there are things within and around us
that attempt to step between us and our relationship to God's goodness.
There are things that we think, things that we do, that act to separate us from God.
The church calls that "sin."
Let us confess our sins to God,

Silence

One: God of all mercy:
I confess that sin grips me and
I cannot break free.
The sins in my mind, on my lips,
in my acts done or even ignored
Stand between me and you.

**All: My entire heart is not always yours.
My love of neighbor falls short.
In the name of Jesus,
Have mercy on me.**

One: Grant me your renewing forgiveness.
Lead me on your paths of righteousness, And I shall delight in you
And I shall follow you giving glory to your holy name.

All: Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: The God who gives, gives all.
The God who loves, loves all.
The God who forgives, forgives all.

Through Christ, our sins, every one of them:
the sins of commission,
the sins of omission,
the sins we confessed with contrition –
all are forgiven.

All: By the grace of God, we are forgiven. Alleluia!

**GLORIA GLORY BE TO CREATOR, AND TO THE CHRIST, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST
AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE.
ETERNAL LIFE! AMEN. AMEN.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

COMMUNION HYMN

"LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER"

NCH 330

**Let us break bread together on our knees, (on our knees)
Let us break bread together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)**

**Let us drink wine together on our knees, (on our knees)
Let us drink wine together on our knees. (on our knees)**

When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

Let us praise God together on our knees, (on our knees)
Let us praise God together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PARTAKING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ, and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink. Now send us forth to be your people in the world. Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil, and to proclaim in all we say and do your Good News in Christ Jesus. Amen.

SENDING HYMN

"SPIRIT SONG"

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love;
Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit, like a dove,
Will descend upon your life and make you whole
 Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs
 Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs.
Oh, come and sing the song with gladness as your hearts are filled with joy
Lift your hands in sweet surrender to his name
Oh, give him all your tears and sadness, give him all your years of pain,
And you'll enter into life in Jesus' name Refrain

BENEDICTION

God's peace: carry you, keep you and hold you.
God's love: nourish, bless and enfold you.
God's spirit: inspire, lift and mold you.

Almighty God: Triune, holy and blessed
Be with you now and forever. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Kari Evans

Remember in Prayer: Bill Cowell, Eunice Gasow, and Aggie Schue. We pray for others who have been ill or are home bound and those at Oak Terrace and Golden Hearts. We pray for health and healing for all people everywhere. Pray for the ministries of our church. Pray for those serving in the military and for our local and national leaders during these trying times.

If you have a prayer request or would like to receive a call from Pastor Dennis call his office at 237-2595 (leave a private voice mail) or his cell 763-258-3371.

Giving our Gifts to God:

Tithes and Offerings can be sent to Gaylord United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 385 Gaylord, MN 55334 or
or dropped by the church office on Wednesday between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Thank you for your continued support for the ministries of this church.

Pastor Dennis is usually in the office each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
He can be reached at the office, 237-2595 (private voice mail) or his cell: 763-258-3371.

E-mail: dmckee545@gmail.com

Website at listen2god.org

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- ❖ You can view our Church Service online by Friday or Saturday each week. Click on the link to view Service at: <https://listen2god.org/weekly-message/>
- ❖ We will begin worshipping together on [Sunday, August 16th at 9:30 a.m.](#) in the church building.
- ❖ ***From the Heart Offering in August*** will be moved to the 16th instead of the 9th, since we plan to meet again in church on August 16. This special offering will go to our Church Nursery to help purchase toys and furniture. What a wonderful project for our church!
- ❖ We have decided to [extend the deadline for UCC post-secondary scholarships](#) until the end of July; these will be awarded shortly after the deadline. If you need an application form they are available at church or one can be emailed to you. Thank you to all who support this important need for our young adults as they further their education.

