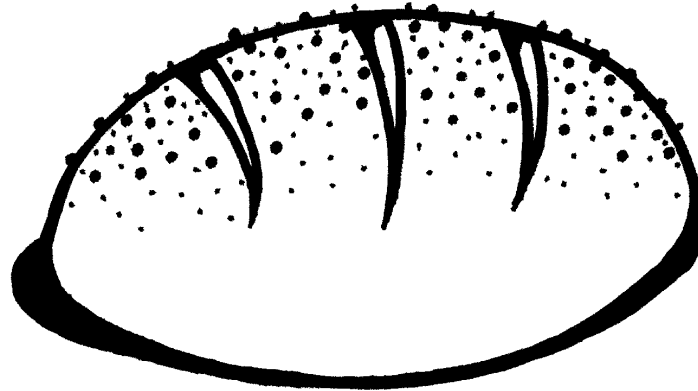


ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 08, 2021

"Word Out" transcript



Prelude

To a Wild Rose
Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, to Queen Anne Lutheran Church. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news in proclamation, spoken and sung; a time when you can be still, and know God is God.

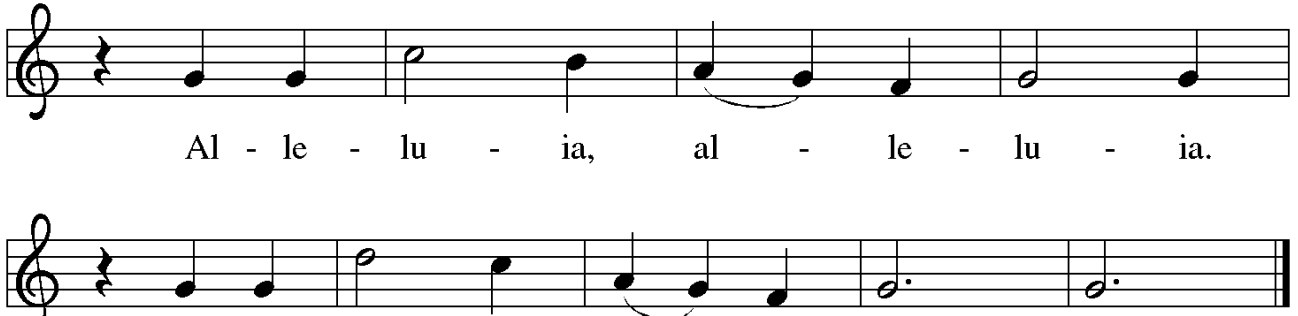
Jesus says that the bread he gives for the life of the world is his flesh, and whoever eats this bread has eternal life now and will be raised on the last day. The comparison has generated considerable misunderstanding. Finding ourselves now on the verge of returning to in-person worship and receiving holy communion, we have a great opportunity to ask “what are we doing when we receive the sacrament? How do we make sense of it? Are we truly consuming His body and blood?”


Greeting

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

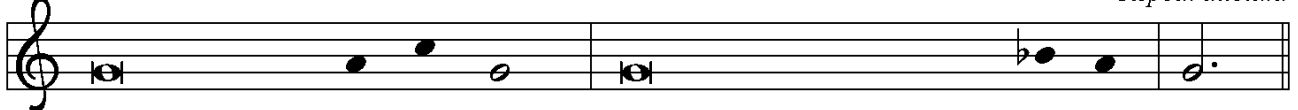
Gospel Acclamation

John 6:51

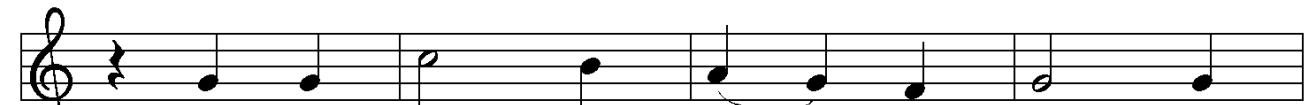
G: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

P: I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats this bread will live forever.

G: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Scripture Reading:

John 6:35, 41-51

A: The Holy Gospel according to John, the sixth chapter.

G: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A: ³⁵Jesus said to [the crowd,] "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ⁴¹Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴²They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless

drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I 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."

📖: The Gospel of the Lord.

🎵: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Bread of Life
Pastor Dan Peterson

In Times of Dread, Cling to the Bread

It was yet another dark corner of the Second World War. Bombing raids ravaged northern Europe, destroying countless lives and upending countless more. Among those who survived were children who had been orphaned by the attacks. Many found safety and received care at refugee camps. Those who cared for them, however, encountered a serious problem: the children could not sleep. Not only were they traumatized. They were also terrified of waking up the next day without food or a home.

Fortunately, by a stroke of grace, one of the caregivers came up with an idea: give each child a piece of bread to take with them to bed. The suggestion worked. The children were able to sleep by holding the bread, in some cases tightly. It reminded them that they had been fed that day, that they had received their "daily bread," and it gave them security to trust that tomorrow, when they woke up, they would eat again.

A Strange Way of Speaking

Jesus refers to himself as the "bread of life" in today's reading. "Come to me," he seems to be saying, and I will provide you with *spiritual sustenance* the way

bread provides you with physical sustenance.” The people around him begin to grumble, though, when he goes on to identify himself with the bread that comes from heaven, and that those who eat it will not die. The conclusion is the most outrageous: the bread of life is his flesh, and you must eat it to live (John 6:51).

Naturally, we can see why Jesus confused the religious authorities (“the Jews”) who were present among the people to whom he was speaking. “This makes no sense,” we can imagine them saying. “Who besides Iron Man can come down from heaven? That’s impossible!”

We can also see why some of Jesus’ disciples will desert him a bit later in the chapter (John 6:66). “This teaching is difficult,” they say. “You had us at spiritual sustenance,” one of the more outspoken ones might have added. “We understood what you were doing. You were using the feeding of the 5,000 with just a few loaves of bread to teach us something about who you are. You were trying to tell us that you offer spiritual food. Unlike the manna in the desert which came from heaven to feed our ancestors, the food you offer is imperishable. It will sustain us throughout this life as well as in the life to come (see John 6:44). That is all good! But equating that bread with your flesh? That’s too far! People will call us cannibals. Why can’t you simply use plain speech?”

The good news, this disciple should have remembered, is that Jesus does use plain speech. We just have to leave John’s Gospel to find it.

The Gospel within the Gospel

The word “gospel” has two meanings. When we talk about the Gospels (upper-case G), we talk about the good news in story form. These are the four narratives we have in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

When we talk about the gospel (lower-case g), on the other hand, we refer to the good news itself. One of the greatest expressions of the lower-case gospel comes to us in the upper-case Gospel of Matthew. There Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary or carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble at

heart, and you will find rest in your souls" (Matt 11:28-29). This is good news! Jesus offers us peace, rest for our weary souls.

Let's pause here for a moment and take a look at Jesus' use of the word "souls." We can easily misconstrue its meaning. Jesus is not referring to some kind of disembodied essence, a ghost in the machine of the human body that escapes to the netherworld after death. Instead, he invites us to receive peace from him at the heart of our innermost being. Think of a perfectly still lake. Jesus, according to Matthew's Gospel, wants that kind of stillness for us, especially as we sail through the storms of life.

The good news, then, comes to us in the form of a promise. Jesus promises peace to all who come to him, or rather, to all who are drawn to him by God (John 6:44), and he does so in wonderfully simple, plain speech. "Come to me, all you who are weary or carrying heavy burdens . . . for I am gentle and humble at heart, and you will find rest for your souls," that is, rest at the innermost core of your being.

Sometimes we need words like these in *plain speech*, especially in moments where we don't have it within us to decipher metaphors. All of us have moments where life seems to crash down upon us, moments where we lose hope, moments when our bodies fail us, a friendship falters, or someone close to us passes away. If this describes you at *this moment*, set John aside if necessary and hear once again the gospel in Matthew's Gospel: "Come to me," Jesus says, "all of you that are weary or carrying heavy burdens . . . for I am gentle and humble at heart, and you will find rest in your souls."

My grandfather used to put it like this: in times of trouble, "don't forget to turn to Jesus and ask him to help you." There you will find peace. That is the good news.

Same Gospel, Different Gospel

Some of you listening, as noted, may be in a moment where you find yourselves weary, overwhelmed, grieving, uncertain about the future, lonely, or sad. The last thing you want (quite understandably) is a message you have to

decode. Thanks be to God we have the gospel in plain speech according to Matthew.

But what about those who desire the opposite, the seekers among us who crave depth and who want to bore down into Scripture to find its hidden gems of insight, reassurance, and new ways of seeing? Who speaks for them?

For an answer, we return to the Gospel of John. In today's reading, Jesus invites us to pause and contemplate his teaching. He asks us implicitly to look beneath the surface, and here is what we find: John's Jesus says the same thing Matthew's does, only in a different way! When Jesus invites his listeners to "believe" in him according to John 6:47, he means "trust" in him. Belief, after all, merely involves accepting something cognitively you cannot see or prove. Trust, on the other hand, involves giving your heart to something. It involves the whole self – body, spirit, and mind.

Now let's dig a little deeper: when Jesus uses the phrase "eternal life," he refers to a *quality* of life we can experience in the present *before* we die, not just an endless *quantity* of life awaiting us after we die (see John 17:3). This is the kind of life where we experience *moments* of freedom from anxiety, the kind where death, as Paul says, has lost its sting. In John, therefore, Jesus offers us a simple message once we clarify the meaning of his words: trust in him, he says, and you will experience moments in life without worrying about what comes next.

In even plainer speech, he will carry your burdens and give rest to your soul.

How Jesus Helps Us when We Struggle to Believe

It's one thing to hear that we should trust Jesus to alleviate our anxieties, but how do we do it? For some of us, no matter how hard we try, trusting in Jesus *doesn't* curb our fears or dry our tears. We need something more than words, something tangible, something real to help us trust when our faith is weak. And here is more good news: Jesus offers this assistance in today's Gospel.

It's the bread.

The word “bread” – or better, “daily bread” – carries an important meaning. According to Martin Luther in the *Small Catechism*, it’s an umbrella term that incorporates everything from food and water to good friends and faithful neighbors. All of these provide sustenance. They sustain us. When we cling to the bread we receive in Jesus’ name, we have in our possession a physical reminder of the *spiritual sustenance* he gives to us. Think about it: Jesus, who is no longer with us in human form, left for us a tangible sign of his continued presence in our lives. Nothing, not even a pandemic, will take that from us.

The bread, in short, helps us trust when we find ourselves struggling with the spoken word alone. It is a physical reminder, a sign, of his never-ending presence in our lives.

When you receive the bread, therefore, grasp it. “Cling to it as a reminder,” Jesus would likely say, “that I will be with you always. I fed you yesterday, I feed you today, and I will feed you tomorrow. Hold this bread and you hold the life I offer in the palm of your hand.”

“And if I cannot teach you,” he might add, “learn it from the children. Do as the orphans did. In times of dread, cling to the bread.”

Amen.

Are you curious about today’s story? You can read more about it in [Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life](#) by Dennis, Sheila, and Matthew Linn.

Hymn of the Day

My Savior, You Have Led Me

(stanzas 2-4 from *O Living Bread from Heaven*)

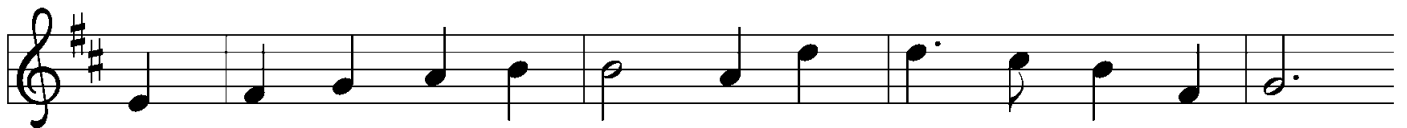
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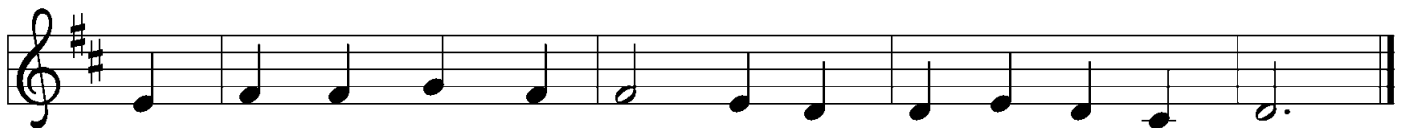
1 My Sav - ior, you have led me with - in your ho - liest place,
2 You gave me all I want - ed; this food can death de - stroy.
3 Oh, grant me then, well - strength - ened with heav' n - ly food, while here



and here your - self have fed me with trea - sures of your grace;
And you have free - ly grant - ed the cup of end - less joy.
my course on earth is length - ened, to serve you, free from fear;



for you have free - ly giv - en what earth could nev - er buy,
My Lord, I do not mer - it the fa - vor you have shown,
and bring me home to praise you where none can peace de - stroy,



the bread of life from heav - en, that now I shall not die.
and all my soul and spir - it bow down be - fore your throne.
where I will ev - er raise you glad songs in end - less joy.

Text: Johann Rist, 1607-1667; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.
Music: AURELIA, Samuel S. Wesley, 1810-1876

Prayers of the Church

A: Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: For the church of Christ in all its diverse forms. For mission developers, new mission starts, and all communities of faith exploring new models of ministry for the sake of the gospel. For congregations facing difficult decisions about their future. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For the health and well-being of creation. For shade trees that provide refuge from the hot summer sun. For lakes, rivers, and oceans contaminated by pollution and all who lack clean water.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For those called to positions of authority in our legal system, we pray. For judges, lawyers, law clerks, and court employees who ensure the fair administration of justice. For corrections officers and prison chaplains, that they would deal mercifully with those who are incarcerated.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For all who cry out to you in their affliction. For exiles, refugees, and others who face long and difficult journeys, uncertain about the future. For all who mourn the death of a loved one, and for all who are sick.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For all who hear this service, we pray. For those who are making careful preparations to return to in-person worship, and for all who will gather together again in faith and fellowship for the first time in many months.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For whom or what else do the people of God pray?

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

A: Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For those who have been raised to eternal life, we give thanks. With all the saints we praise you for the bread of life that keeps us in your love forever.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

G: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

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

G: **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

and 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.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Fugue in G minor ("Little")

J.S. Bach (1685–1750)

About today's music

A *fugue* is a piece of music with different musical lines or “voices” that enter and layer upon each other. Fugues occur in keyboard music, choral music, orchestral music, and in classical music as well as jazz. Much church music, both ancient and modern, includes fugues or fugal sections. Today's postlude is a famous example of this compositional technique. If you're listening with children, consider listening a second time, making a game of identifying when the *subject* (the main theme that starts the piece) and the *countersubject* (the secondary theme that answers the main theme) enter in the hands or pedals. (You might also catch when your cantor makes a little goof or two... I decided the overall “take” was good, and in person there's no such thing as “take two,” besides!) On second hearing you may also be more aware of the clever changes Bach makes, such as changing to a major key in the middle of the piece while retaining the basic sound of the main theme.

—Cantor Kyle



Queen Anne

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Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector and Intercessor	Susan Evans

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