

First St. John Lutheran Church

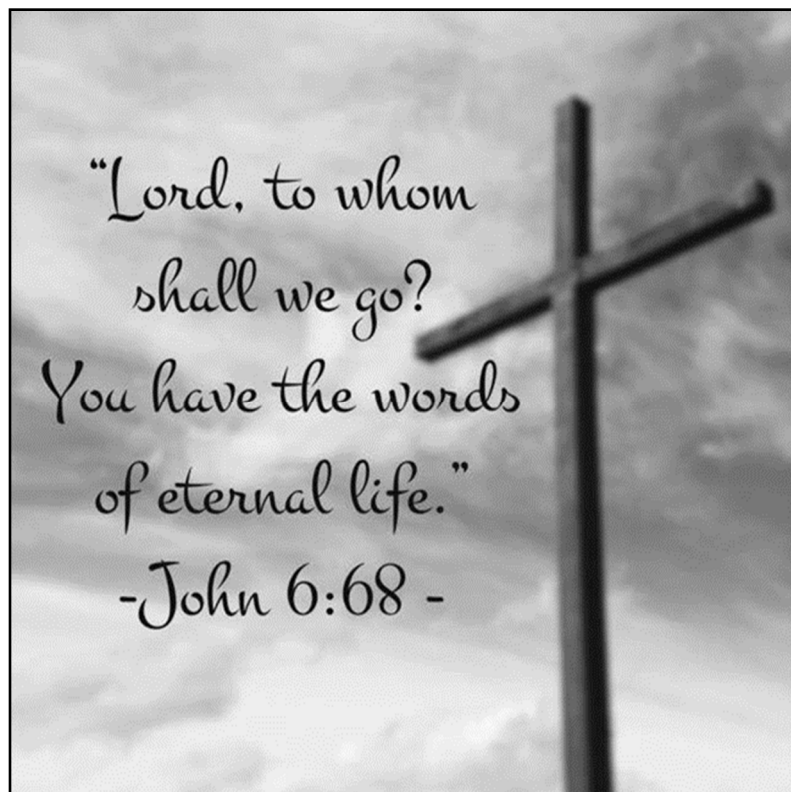
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Annette Slater - Music Director
Dr. Anthony Pattin - Organist
Jacob Kelly - Youth & Family Minister



August 22, 2021

13th Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our guidelines below.

If you are fully vaccinated, you no longer need to wear masks. However, if you have not been vaccinated, please continue wearing a mask. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse.

The service will be recorded and published to the website. We are now live streaming the service on our church website, www.firststjohn.com

Elders will hand out the bulletins. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Nursery is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the Narthex (lobby) by the telephone. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

Memorials: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office or in the Narthex (lobby) and place it in the offering plate.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude Jacob Henry

Ring of the Bell

Opening Song "Open the Eyes of My Heart" Praise Singers

Confession and Forgiveness (*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*)

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy.

C: Amen.

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

(Silence is kept for reflection)

P: God, our provider, help us.

C: **It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. 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.

Prayer of the Day

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. 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.

C: Amen.

Announcements

FIRST READING: Joshua 24:16-18

In the Near East covenant means "agreement" or "alliance," describing relationships and is primarily used to characterize the relationship between God and Israel. By delivering Israel, God has begun the relationship, and the people respond.

[After Joshua spoke,] then 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."

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 34:15-22

The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous. (Ps. 34:15)

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

¹⁶ **The face of the Lord is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.**

¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.

¹⁸ **The Lord is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.**

¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the Lord rescues them from them all.

²⁰ **He keeps all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.**

²¹ Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

²² **The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 6:10-11, 18-20

The military language here calls to mind the power of the Roman Empire in the first century. Followers of Christ are to put on the armor of God and remain strong in the face of cosmic evil forces.

Be 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.

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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

Gospel Acclamation

P: The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 6.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 6:56-69

The "hard saying" that offends Jesus' disciples is his claim that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. The followers who return to their old lives know something about how odd this sounds. Simon Peter asks the most important question: "To whom shall we go?"

[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."

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON
Sermon Hymn

"Give Me Jesus"

Pastor Rayl
No. 770

(Please stand)

Apostles' Creed

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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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.

The Offering *(As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.)*

Musical Offertory

Jacob Henry

Offering Prayer

P: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts; ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: your mercy is great.

The Lord's Prayer (*prayed by all*)

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.

Blessing

P: The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, + be upon you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" No. 836
Postlude Jacob Henry

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Tom Gaskins, Terry Ruedy

SOUND BOARD

Dave Wilbarger

August 22, 2021

13th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Into Mystery

"I am the bread of life," Jesus has been telling the crowds. Those who eat of this bread will never be hungry; will live forever; will abide in him, and he in them. The promises are fulfillment of need, the gift of eternal life, and the assurance of intimacy with God. But the price is teaching that is difficult to accept, if not downright offensive. This Jesus from Nazareth, a man whose father and mother they know, is claiming to provide, or to actually be, the bread sent from heaven--blasphemy! The food and drink are Jesus' own flesh and blood--barbarism! Following him has been comforting and exhilarating as he has expanded their religious horizons--but there are limits!

Now even many disciples turn away. Jesus asks the remaining twelve if they, too, wish to go. It is a moment of truth. Jesus has invited them into the realm of mystery, which only the outlandish language of paradox can convey. How will they respond?

Life is a constant migration into the unknown. Along with familiar sorts of landscapes will be much that we can neither predict nor understand. But commitment is necessary if our journey is to have meaning and momentum.

"Lord, to whom can we go?" answers Simon Peter. "You have the words of eternal life."

Faith itself is a mystery, being both gift--one is drawn by the Father, guided by the Spirit--and response. By definition, faith is different from calculation that yields controllable results. It is a risk, a leap, that transports us to a realm where astonishing opposites coexist: body and blood are inseparable from spirit and life, and the Holy One of God is found in an itinerant preacher. The words of eternal life echo in waves of vibrating energy: a form of light for our journey--and daily bread.