**Worship Plan for Sunday, August 25, 2024** **\* 14th Sunday after Pentecost**

**Introduction to the day**

In today’s gospel many people take offense at Jesus’ invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood; even many of Jesus’ disciples peel off. This is the backdrop in John’s gospel for Peter’s confession of faith. “To whom can we go?” asks Peter, in words we sometimes sing just before the gospel is read. “You have the words of eternal life.” In order to take such a stand, as Peter and Joshua did, Paul tells us to arm ourselves with the word of God. We pray in the Spirit that we might be bold ambassadors of the gospel.

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: Questions Remain**

Throughout his time on earth, Jesus taught the disciples what it means to follow him, delving deeper into difficult concepts with each step toward the cross. Jesus’ thought-provoking and life-changing words challenged existing wisdom, stretching the boundaries of belief, forcing each person who heard them to reevaluate everything they thought they knew. How could they eat this bread and live forever?

Is it any easier for us to wrap our minds around Jesus’ teachings? How do we open our hearts to the mystery of flesh given for us, blood shed for us, and bread come down from heaven when our culture insists that there is a simple black-and-white answer to every question? Who takes time to slow down and reflect on challenging Bible passages? Can we allow those words we do not understand to just be, to percolate and take root in the fertile soil of Christ’s presence until the Spirit can coax a shoot of understanding to spring forth and grow into the light?

Too many unanswered questions weighed heavily on some of Jesus’ followers. They wanted out; it was too difficult. They turned back to the safety of familiar routines and comfortable ideologies, prompting Jesus to wonder if all the disciples would abandon him. “Do you also wish to go away?” he asked the twelve (John 6:67). He asks the same question of us today whenever the circumstances of our lives challenge our faith, whenever our hearts are broken and our bodies exhausted, whenever it feels like we cannot take another step. Will we trust in Jesus’ promise that his words are spirit and life? Do we believe he is the Holy One of God?

Questions remain, but the good news is that God’s love is stronger than our doubts and fears, calling us back to worship, filling us with strength and giving us peace in the midst of uncertainty.

**Processional**

**AM: Welcome**

Good morning! It's wonderful to see all of you this morning! Welcome to Faith Lutheran Church, where grace and love abound and the Holy Spirit uplifts and inspires us. A special welcome to those joining us on line and to those of you who are here for the first time. Today, our lay preacher is Steve Kent. Exciting things are happening here during our search for a permanent pastor, and everyone is encouraged to participate fully, whether you are a first-time visitor, or have been around for a while.

**AM: ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The altar flowers were provided by Tom and Judy Brosz celebrating their birthdays.

Please note that the Hymn Planners meeting was changed to this Tuesday, August 27 at 10:00, in person or Zoom.

If you are in need of pastoral care, please feel free to reach out to Pr. Shane Freiberg at 951-337-6384.

For the month of August, we are collecting side dishes (mashed potatoes, rice-a-roni, stuffing), grocery bags, and empty egg cartons for the Community Cupboard. Please place donations in the wire basket in the foyer.

Our next and final Summer Ice Cream Social of this year is this Wednesday, the 28th at 6:30pm! All are welcome!

Save the date! September 8th is God's Work Our Hands Sunday! More information is available in the Narthex.

On September 28th at 4:00 we will be having a summer BBQ! For more information, there are flyers in the Narthex.

If you would like to help assemble military care packages for deployed troops overseas, please see the information in the Narthex.

The Blessing of the Animals will be on October 12th. There are flyers in the Narthex and we would love for each of you to take a couple to post at your veterinarian's office and other public areas.

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office. You can also go to the narthex and sign up to have the Forecaster and weekly announcements sent to you via email or via phone call. Thank you!

**Endowment FUND BOARD Presentation**

**AM: Silence**

Let us take a moment of silence to quiet our hearts and minds and prepare for worship.

**AM: Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**AM: 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.**

This is the day that the Lord has made,

**let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

**AM: Please turn to hymn 514**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song:*O Word of God Incarnate* (ELW 514)**

**AM: Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

**AM: Prayer of the Day**

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.**

**Amen.**

**Children's Chat**

**AM: Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**Lector: First Reading:** Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

1Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. 2aAnd Joshua said to all the people, 14“Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” 16Then 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.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Psalmody:** Psalm 34:15-22

15The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and God’s ears are open to their cry.

16**The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to erase the remembrance of them from the earth.**

17The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them and delivers them from all their troubles.

18**The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those whose spirits are crushed.**

19Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them from every one.

20**God will keep safe all their bones; not one of them shall be broken.**

21Evil will bring death to the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

22**O Lord, you redeem the life of your servants, and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.**

**Amen.**

**Lector: Second Reading:** Ephesians 6:10-20

10Be 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. 12For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. 15As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. 16With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 151)**

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

***Please stand for the gospel***

**lP: Gospel:** John 6:56-69

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon by Steve Kent**

**AM:** Please stand as you are willing and able for the Hymn of the Day.

**Hymn of the Day: *There is a God (by Phillips, Craig and Dean)***

**AM: Apostle's Creed**

We continue as we confess our faith using the words of the Apostle's Creed.

**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, 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.**

**AM: Prayers of Intercession**

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

We pray for the church, that the transformational power of God enters the hearts of all people. May its leaders serve as examples of your grace and healing across time and space. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

We pray for the creation, that we will humbly observe the swirl of wind and the heat of the bright sun. Teach us to honor all you have made and to care for the animals, plants, air, and bodies of water of this planet. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

We pray for those charged with leadership, lawmaking, and governance of our towns, states, and countries, that they will strive for goodness and justice all the days of their lives and callings. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

We pray for any who are sick and suffering, especially Judy Appel and family; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Ruth Ditsch; Arlene Dressler; Yvonne Fields; Doris Hays; the Holmes family; Sarge Hunter; Carol Kobersteen; Pat Loughboro; Patsy Loughboro; Donna McCain; Jean Miles; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Michael Myers; Esther Neumann; Candy Pellechio and family; Tina Peteroski; Marilyn Rieti; Dee Seel; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; Sheron Zolzer; the homebound; the emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery or tests. At this time, we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts.

Guide us to offer hospitality, shelter, friendship, and care to any in need. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation and its ministry in the wider community. May we share the transforming beauty and love of God in ways that honor the dignity of all whom we encounter. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Trusting that all the saints, prophets, and those who die in faith are held in your care, we remember in thanksgiving those who have died. Grant us your gift of salvation as we await your coming again in glory. God of grace,

**receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**AM: Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**AM: Offering**

Today the offering emphasis is the Stewardship Ministry. The focus of this ministry is to help us understand what it means to give our first fruits of time, talent and treasure. This Ministry organizes the Pledge program in the Fall, as well as collects the time and talent sheets which members fill out. They also help us to understand what it means to be a good steward of the gifts God has so graciously and abundantly given to each of us. Are you praying about what you not only receive from God, but about what you give to God? Let us give thanks for both.

**AM: Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

***Please feel free to either listen to our musical offering or sing along***

**Musical Offering: *I Can Only Imagine (by MercyMe)***

**PR. KEN PUCCIO: Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue (ELW p. 152)**

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.**

**PR. KEN: Preface (ELW p. 153)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, Holy (all sing) (ELW p. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**PR. KEN: Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**PR. KEN: INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God’s children are welcome to Christ’s table.

Gather at the altar rail to receive the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you’ve received the communion elements. Please commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

**PR. KEN: Invitation to Communion**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**During Distribution:*As the Grains of Wheat* (ELW 465)**

 ***In the Singing* (ELW 466)**

 ***Eat This Bread: Jesus Christ, Bread of Life* (ELW 472)**

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**AM: Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

**AM: Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song: *Awesome God (by Michael W. Smith)***

**AM: Dismissal**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Invitation**

The Church Council Members invite guests and visitors to come and meet us in the narthex as you exit so that we can meet and welcome you. All are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall for cookies, coffee and conversation.

**THIS WEEK AT FAITH**

Monday, the 26th: Council meets at 1:00

Tuesday, the 27th: Hymn Planners meet at 10:00

Wednesday, the 28th: Summer Ice Cream Social begins at 6:30

Friday, the 30th: Al-Anon meets at 10:30

Sunday, Sept. 1st: Worship begins at 9:30

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