

**Grace Lutheran Church, Uniondale, New York**  
**Lutheran Church of the Epiphany~ Iglesia Luterana de la Epifanía, Hempstead New York**  
**Marianne K. Tomecek, Interim Pastor**

*Tenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Proper 13B– August 1, 2021*

*Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15*

*Psalm 78:23-29*

*Ephesians 4:1-16*

*John 6:24-35*

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN!*

Emmanuel – God with us – the name so familiar to us in the Christmas season, is not untimely now, in the midst of the season after Pentecost. It's not untimely because God is with us. Always. God has been with us, from the time before we humans can even remember.

God was with us in the liberation from Egypt and the long wandering in the wilderness. God's presence was made known to the people of Israel in the manna on the ground every morning and the quails in their midst for every evening meal.

That presence of God (and the people's lack of appreciation for what God had provided them) was not only recorded in Exodus (16:12), but also was praised in the psalm we've recited today (78:23-39).

And then, millennia later, the presence of God was still being made known to God's people. Now in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, traveling amid the people of Judah and Galilee, showing his disciples how to preach the Gospel, how to heal the ills of the masses, and how to feed the thousands of hungry people with the bread of life.

As I said last week, John's telling of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament that expresses the unity of the Body of Christ in the world, isn't presented in the context of the last meal shared by Jesus and his closest disciples as it is in the other three Gospels. It has been said that Jesus' feeding of the crowd is that expression of the Holy Eucharist in John's Gospel.

And once they'd been fed, the crowd continued to follow him the next day, maybe seeking more food, a Jesus said, It may be that they were seeking what he alone brought into the world. The crowd recalls manna in the wilderness as the sign of God's presence with the people. So they ask Jesus what sign he will give them so that they will believe in him, as the one who was sent by God. This would be doing

the work of God.

Jesus has been giving signs his entire adult life, throughout his public ministry. And his message has been the same, again and again. “Come to me, and I will give you living water.” “Come to me, and I will give you the bread of life.” (John 6:35.) Not just to slake the day’s thirst and to ease today’s hunger, but to nourish you for eternal life. (John 6:27.)

Do we come to Jesus for that living water and bread of life? What does our sharing our lives in relationship with Jesus mean to us? How do we experience the presence of God in our everyday lives? Do we recognize God’s presence, carrying us through the difficulties we undergo? Maybe even more significantly, are we aware of God working in our lives as we experience joys and the celebrations of life? Do we do the work of God by believing that Jesus is the one God the Father has sent?

What difference does it make to us to have the Bread of Life sustaining us, in our daily, earthly existence, but also in our eternal lives? What does life mean when you think about what God is doing in your life?

How are you carrying out the ministry that God has placed in your care? Are you working toward the unity of the Body of Christ in the world? Paul wrote to the Ephesians,

I ... beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4:1-3.)

This encouragement may take us aback. How can we be worthy of God’s calling, we fallible, sinful human beings? The Greek word that we translate as “worthy” in this text, suggests that it is our responsibility to, in essence, measure up to living as God wishes us to live, is *axios*, a term that describes how two sides of a scale are to be in equilibrium. Professor and Pastor Richard Carlson says about this passage:

Thus, the appeal here is for Christian living to be in equilibrium with God’s call. Christians live out who God has already made them to be. Christian conduct not only flows out of the new reality created by God, Christian conduct puts into concrete action their new reality in

Christ.

Carlson, Richard, [Commentary on Ephesians 4:1-16 - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary.](#)

Therefore, as we conclude our time together today and go on to our separate lives, Paul would have us remember:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. (4:4-7.)

Jesus feeds us with his own self, the Bread of Life, so that we know that we are forgiven when we sin. And Jesus gives us a mission: to spread the Gospel as he did, sharing the words, and serving the people of God so that all will be part of this one body.

How can you do that? What will you do to carry out the mission God has placed in your heart? What does it mean to believe that Emmanuel – God is with us? What does it mean to you to believe that Jesus is God in your presence? What difference does that make?

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen