

**A "VIRTUAL" SERVICE TO UNITE US IN SPIRIT  
FOR SUNDAY AUGUST 1, 2021  
(TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST)  
(and a daily prayer)**

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*Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ  
2401 Atwood Avenue, Madison WI*



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## **The Community Gathers**

Lighting of the Candle

Welcome

Announcements, Joys & Concerns

♪Prelude

## **Gathering Prayer**

*Pastor: You call your people to prayer and praise in many ways. This day, bring us together just as you called the people of Israel to gather manna in the desert to eat and sustain life.*

**All: God of unity, give us this day our daily bread.**

*Pastor: Offer us the nutrients we need to remain connected to you. As spiritual beings, we desire to receive food that endures—faith, hope, and love.*

**All: God of grace, give us this day our daily bread.**

Pastor: *All life is created and nourished by you! May we grow into new circles of understanding and being, reflecting the ways in which we have been touched by your holy manna.*

All: **Holy Spirit, come! Give us this day our daily bread.**

♪Hymn of Praise No. 18 *Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer*

**Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.**

**Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow. Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield, ever be my strength and shield.**

**When I reach the river Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside. Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever sing to you, I will ever sing to you.**

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

**Celebrating the Sacrament of Communion**

**Invitation to Communion**

Pastor: *We invite you, though this meal is far more than any of us can understand. We welcome you, whether you are a six-foot away "pod" of one or more God-lovers, or wireless as the Holy Spirit. We want to offer you this good news, whether you long for church or have been damaged by some church-experience in the past. This is Communion. We don't deserve it; we don't define it; we don't own it; but it is the greatest gift we have to give*

*and we want to share it with you.*

### **Prayer of Remembrance and Consecration**

*Pastor: Christ, at our table we remember.*

*We remember your “tabling”  
at Martha’s kitchen and the beach fish-fry  
at homes of the self-righteous,  
or the disrespected.*

*(pause)*

*We remember a wedding made more festive  
and we pray for every human relationship.*

*(pause)*

*We remember loaves and fish  
and pray for places where there is no food.*

*(pause)*

*We remember Passover, when you washed feet,  
shared gravy with a betrayer, and sang a hymn,  
and we pray for all who need to learn  
how to serve or be served,  
how to turn away from temptation  
or open up to a song  
not only vocalized but heart music.*

*(pause)*

*We remember all tables,  
from cathedrals to campgrounds —  
where your children have gathered  
to eat bread or tortilla, rice cake or cassava,  
and we lift into your love  
five-star churches  
and down-on-their luck holy-diners.*

*(pause)*

*We communion the remembrance of saints  
in all times and places,  
and lift before you  
those we have loved from the past,  
our saints who need healing, comfort for loss,  
guidance in decisions, peace in living,  
and many others in whom the yeast has not yet risen,  
though they may feel punched down.*

*(pause)*

*Christ, yours is the wheat and yours the grape,*

*yours is the leaven and the love.  
rest your Spirit on this place  
of prayer and party, in-person and online,  
shine your blessing on every face,  
now and whenever food is offered.*

*This is the feast your heart rehearsed,  
eating this bread we break each curse,  
drinking this cup, we do not thirst. Amen*

### **Sharing of the Elements**

Pastor: *The Bread on our tables is blessed and broken.*

Unison: **Sharing love, we will never be hungry.**

Pastor: *The Cup on our tables is blessed and shared, like the overflowing of tears and joy.*

Unison: **Even a sip is drinking deeply.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Unison: **We give you thanks, O Christ, for gathering us at all our tables for word of life and sacred banquet. As we part from one another with the leftovers of your love, turn our being fed and blessed into holy takeout, as share all we have received, slowly, sweetly and surely with all of your children. Amen.**

♪ Sung Prayer Response No. 283 *Spirit of the Living God*

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

**Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.**

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

### **The Community Shares God's Word**

#### **Scripture Readings: John 6: 24-35**

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them,

“This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

## Sermon

### The Community Responds to God’s Word

♪ Hymn of Response No. 788 *Eat This Bread (sung twice)*

**Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
Come to me and never be hungry.  
Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
Trust in me and you will not thirst.**

## Offering

*Thank you for your electronic offerings, or for mailing in your offerings for the ministry and mission of this congregation. Through your generosity, we are doing God’s work in the world.*

*Thank you for all you are doing to help keep all in community safe, including getting vaccinated (if safe for you), wearing of face masks, physically distancing, and hand washing.*

## Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Pastor: *O God, we share these gifts in the spirit of those who shared their loaves and fishes:*

All: **we ask that you take these gifts and use them to feed all of creation—**

Pastor: *to produce seed and grain, filling humans and animals alike,*

All: **and to restore wholeness in the places where malnourishment exists. Amen**

## The Community Goes Forth

♪Sending Hymn #423 *Great Is Your Faithfulness*

**Great is your faithfulness O God Creator, with you no shadow of turning we see. You do not change your compassions they fail not, all of your goodness forever will be. Great is your faithfulness. Great is your faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed your hand has provided, great is your faithfulness God unto me.**

**Summer and winter and spring time and harvest, sun moon and stars in their courses above. Join with all natures in manifold witness, to your great faithfulness mercy and love. Great is your faithfulness. Great is your faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed your hand has provided, great is your faithfulness God unto me.**

**Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring, your own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine with ten thousand beside. Great is your faithfulness. Great is your faithfulness. Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed your hand has provided, great is your faithfulness God unto me.**

### **Benediction and Sending Prayer**

*Pastor: Let us go forth in faith in our Nonperishable God, who gives us daily what we need to feed our bodies and spirits.*

**All: Our common need for nourishment unites us together as the body of Christ.**

*Pastor: May the holy Bread of Life create sustenance for the journey, calm for troubled stomachs, grace-filled movement for aching limbs, and joyful activity for all bodies as we seek to live in sacred community.*

**All: Our worship has ended, our service begins, as we take God's light out into the world with us!**

### **♪Postlude**

*Pastor: Rev. Gayle Tucker*

*Accompanist: Wilder Deitz*

*Ministers: All the people of Plymouth Congregational UCC*

### **Thoughts to Ponder**

**“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the**

risk it took to blossom.” — Anaïs Nin

“The lotus is the most beautiful flower, whose petals open one by one. But it will only grow in the mud. In order to grow and gain wisdom, first you must have the mud — the obstacles of life and its suffering. ... The mud speaks of the common ground that humans share, no matter what our stations in life. ... Whether we have it all or we have nothing, we are all faced with the same obstacles: sadness, loss, illness, dying and death. If we are to strive as human beings to gain more wisdom, more kindness and more compassion, we must have the intention to grow as a lotus and open each petal one by one. ” — Goldie Hawn

“There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered.” — Nelson Mandela

"I don't preach a social gospel; I preach the Gospel, period. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned for the whole person. When people were hungry, Jesus didn't say, 'Now is that political or social?' He said, 'I feed you.' Because the good news to a hungry person is bread."— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

And a daily (morning) prayer to center yourself for this week (source: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2015/09/credo-for-bread-service.html>)

### **Affirmation**

I believe that bread comes from grain  
that grows in the wind  
and the rain  
with the farmers' help  
far from the eyes of city folk.

I believe that bread comes from love  
the love of [God]  
the love of the farmer  
the love of the baker's hands  
the love of those who bring it to me.

I believe that bread can be  
and should be broken  
and shared  
and given to all persons  
until all have enough  
and then some.

I believe that Jesus loved bread  
and took it  
and broke it  
and blessed it  
and fed his disciples  
and asked them to feed us forever.

I believe enough in bread  
to want it from Jesus  
to want it to nurture me  
to want his life through it  
to want to give life through it.

I believe that his body as bread feeds me  
and as part of his body  
I want to be bread for others.  
I believe the Spirit will help me  
as well Jesus' people. Amen.

~ from Bread for the World Worship Aids II, posted in **Liturgy, Justice and the Reign of God**.

\* *Liturgy adapted from "The Bread of Life," Worship Ways, Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, Copyright © 2021, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ. Used with permission.*