

**A "VIRTUAL" SERVICE TO UNITE US IN SPIRIT
FOR SUNDAY JULY 25, 2021
(NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST)
(and a daily prayer)**

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



The Community Gathers

Lighting of the Candle

Welcome

Announcements, Joys & Concerns

♪ Prelude

Gathering Prayer

Pastor: We join together as hungry eaters to be nourished by the food that you offer us.

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

Pastor: As you care for the wheat fields that turn into bread, and the vineyards that labor to produce sweet wine, tend to our bodies by feeding us what we need for healthy growth.

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

Pastor: The rich crops that you have prepared are now ready to be harvested by our hands and our hearts.

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

♪ Hymn of Praise No. 273 *Praise with Joy the World's Creator*

Praise with joy the world's Creator, God of justice, love and peace, Source and end of human knowledge, grace bestowing without cease. Celebrate the Maker's glory, power to rescue and release.

Praise to Christ who feeds the hungry, frees the captive, finds the lost, Heals the sick, upsets religion, fearless both of fate and cost. Celebrate Christ's constant presence - Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.

Praise the Spirit, sent among us, liberating truth from pride, Forging bonds where race or gender, age or nation dare divide, Celebrate the Spirit's treasure - foolishness non dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Christ, and Spirit, one God in Community, Calling Christians to embody oneness and diversity. Thus the world shall yet believe when shown Christ's vibrant unity.

Children's Message

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.

♪ Sung Prayer Response #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 fresh on me.

The Community Shares God's Word

Scripture Readings: John 6: 1-21

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Sermon

♪Hymn of Response No. 562 *Take My Gifts*

Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me, gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free, now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away, now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!

Take the fruit that I have gathered from the tree your Spirit sowed, harvest of your own compassion, juice that makes the wine of God, spiced with humor, laced with laughter, flavor of the Jesus life, tang of risk and new adventure, taste and zest beyond belief.

Take whatever I can offer, gifts that I have yet to find, skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind, things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be: take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

The Community Responds to God's Word

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: *As we have been granted great abundance, we offer up those blessings in God's name.*

All: **God of wonders, who enabled Jesus and Elisha to feed the multitudes,**

Pastor: *Bless these gifts and use them to fill empty stomachs and empty hearts.*

All: **May our offerings be multiplied to abundantly nourish all the people.**

The Community Goes Forth

♪ Sending Hymn #347 *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*

Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy, bread is broken, the wine is poured, Christ is spoken and seen and heard. Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound. Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound.

Christ is able to make us one, at his table he set the tone, teaching people to live to bless, love in word and in deed express. Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound. Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound.

Jesus calls us in, sends us out, bearing fruit in a world of doubt, gives us love to tell, bread to share, God Immanuel everywhere. Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound. Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound.

Benediction and Sending Prayer

Pastor: *God's love is overwhelming! As we have been fed this day,*

All: **let us go and offer food and drink to others.**

Pastor: *Grant us holy instincts of faith,*

All: **as we trust in you, O God,**

Pastor: *to place the final touches on our culinary masterpieces.*

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

“All you can do is all you can do, but all you can do is enough.” — Art Williams

“Sufficiency isn't two steps up from poverty or one step short of abundance. It isn't a measure of barely enough or more than enough. Sufficiency isn't an amount at all. It is an experience, a context we generate, a declaration, a knowing that there is enough, and that we are enough.” — Brené Brown

“I did my best, and God did the rest.” — Hattie McDaniel

And a daily (morning) prayer to center yourself for this week (source: <http://paintedprayerbook.com/2012/07/22/gathering-the-fragments/>)

Blessing the Fragments

Cup your hands together,
and you will see the shape
this blessing wants to take.

Basket, bowl, vessel:

it cannot help but

hold itself open

to welcome

what comes.

This blessing

knows the secret

of the fragments
that find their way
into its keeping,
the wholeness
that may hide
in what has been
left behind,
the persistence of plenty
where there seemed
only lack.

Look into the hollows
of your hands
and ask
what wants to be
gathered there,
what abundance waits
among the scraps
that come to you,
what feast
will offer itself
from the fragments
that remain.

—Jan Richardson

* Liturgy adapted from “Food for All,” *Worship Ways*, Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, Copyright © 2021, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ. Used with permission.