

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2022

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

**FIRST SUNDAY in LENT**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Come, people of God, to be refreshed and renewed for the journey of life.  
**All: We come to embrace the one who embraces us.**  
One: Come, people of God, to hear again the call to discipleship.  
**All: We come to hear God speak and to relish the presence of the Lord.**  
One: Come, people of God, come.  
**All: We come in joy to worship the Lord.**

**\*OPENING HYMN** “Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days” GtG 166 (*Verses 1-3*)

One: Lord, who throughout these forty days  
for us did fast and pray,  
**All: teach us with you to mourn our sins  
and close by you to stay.**

One: As you with Satan did contend  
and did the victory win,  
**All: O give us strength to persevere,  
in you to conquer sin.**

One: And through these days of penitence,  
**All: and through this Passiontide,**  
One: yes, evermore, in life and death,  
**All: O Lord, with us abide.**

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**\*UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Gracious God,  
you know the ways of good and evil.  
You know the things that tempt us  
and the things that give us life.**

**We have sought after things,  
but we have not sought after you.  
We have expected generosity,  
but we have not shown generosity.  
We confess that we have disobeyed your word,  
denying your providence and care  
and relying on our own cleverness.  
Have mercy on us, we pray:  
cover us with your grace,  
feed us with the bread of life,  
and re-create us in your image;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

**\*SILENT CONFESSION**

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**One:** Happy are those whose sin is forgiven and are reconciled to God!  
Be glad in the Lord and shout for joy:  
**All:** **for in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God!**

**\*THE PEACE**

**One:** The peace of Christ be with you.  
**All:** **And also with you.**  
*(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)*

**THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE READING** Exodus 16:4-12

EXODUS 16:4-12 (New Revised Standard Version)

*<sup>4</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." <sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because the Lord has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?" <sup>8</sup> And Moses said, "When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against the Lord—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord."*

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the Lord, for the Lord has heard your complaining.’”<sup>10</sup> And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.<sup>11</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses and said,<sup>12</sup> “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**SERMON** by Pastor Bill Vincent

From manna in the wilderness, to five loaves and two fish.  
From breaking bread, to “*this is my body broken for you.*”  
From “*people do not live by bread alone,*” to “*give us this day our daily bread.*”

Today we continue our series through Lent – *Lent in Plain Sight* – looking at common objects and what they might teach us, and how they might lead us on our journey.  
Today we focus on bread.

Bread. It is a staple of life. It is food in and of itself. It often represents food in general. It represents that which gives life.

Bread.

Every culture has some form of bread.  
It is prevalent. It is pervasive.  
And it is abundant...or it tends to be...or it can be...or it should be...or it is, if we know how and where to look for it.

The people were in the wilderness, following their miraculous escape from Egypt. And in the trackless waste of wilderness, they feared that they were running out of supplies and would die in the wilderness for lack of provision.

And they complained. They complained out of their fear and anxiety...and their lack of trust.

And Moses and Aaron reported to them what God said:

*“I am going to rain bread from heaven for you.”*

When it shows up that first morning, the people, as they gathered this flaky substance, said, “*Manna,*” which means, “*What is it?*” (Exodus 16:15)

It is bread – maybe in an unexpected place, maybe in an unexpected form – but it is bread: a staple of life; that which gives life.

It is bread that God has given to you...and to us.

This story was passed on from generation to generation, repeated, shared as a reminder that God provides.

So we affirm (and celebrate) that God gives bread to us, to sustain our life. Bread, maybe in places that would surprise us, maybe in forms we might not expect, maybe in ways that are unfamiliar to us. But bread nonetheless.

Of course, we need to remember, as indeed we are reminded numerous times, that *“We do not live by bread alone”* (Deuteronomy 8:3). True.

But, as someone once noted (maybe somewhat tongue in cheek),

**“We may not live by bread alone’. But we do not live long without it either.”**

Bread.

God’s provision for the body as well as for the soul.

Not a matter of one OR the other, or even one emphasized OVER the other.

But BOTH.

For we are BOTH.

So we pray, *“Give us this day our daily bread”* (Matthew 6:11). Bread: for the body and for the soul. Provision. Sustenance...for this day.

And we affirm – indeed, we celebrate – that God does provide “our daily bread”:

-food and drink, clothing and shelter;

-friends and family, a sense of fulfillment in life, faith.

Have we ever known that not to be the case?

I look around us, and surely we know that: surely we have seen that and felt that, tasted that and touched that.

And so we give thanks that God provides our daily bread.

And we pray that God would continue to give us our daily bread this day, and then the next, and then the next; and we ask God to open our eyes (and our hearts and minds) to the how and the where and the who of God’s providing.

For we may ask for a good steak, and instead God might provide us liver and onions – which, let me assure you, is not on the top of my list. It may not be the food we were looking for, but it is food nonetheless.

And lastly, but certainly not leastly, we seek to trust that God will continue to provide.

It seems that’s what the people missed, what got them in trouble. They had seen God provide, but they no longer trusted that God would provide, and so they complained.

Will we trust? Will we trust that God will provide: that God will “give us this day our daily bread”...this day, and then this day, and then this day?

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

But note: there's an additional dimension here: "our" daily bread.

Not just mine. Not just for me.

But for "our," for us. For 'one another'. And for all those other 'one anothers', be they across the pew or across the country, or across the oceans.

Jesus was steeped in his community's traditions. And it was common practice, when gathering around the table, for the head of the household to take the bread from the table, offer a blessing, and then break the bread and share it with those around the table.

The 'breaking of the bread'. The sharing of the bread.

Sharing bread. Sharing "our daily bread."

Sharing God's provision and sustenance.

But how do we do that? How do we participate in that, how do we encourage that, how do we live that out?

-with wide-spread hunger, and homelessness;

-in the midst of those who flee their homes due to violence within and war without.

It can feel overwhelming to consider that question, quite honestly. Let me be clear: I feel overwhelmed.

But then I come back to one of those 'bread' stories where, as John tells it, a boy had five loaves and two fish. Such a meager start. Yet when all was said and done, 5000 were fed, with leftovers to spare. (See John 6:1-13)

Jill Duffield reminds us,

**Jesus can do more than we hope or imagine with the small resources we willingly give to him in faith. ... Jesus does not ask of us that which we do not have. He instead receives what we offer, takes, blesses, uses, and multiplies our five loaves ... All we need do is to be like the boy, to bravely step forward in the middle of intimidating circumstances and offer to Jesus whatever we have on any given day. Jesus takes it from there. (*Lent in Plain Sight*, p.32)**

Offer what we have. Offer from the daily bread God has given us.

-to give to the Foster Closet so that a child can have clothes to wear.

-to share with Second Blessings/Agape House so that a family can have dinner tonight.

-to give to One Great Hour of Sharing so that we can help provide shelter and refuge to those fleeing the turmoil and devastation of troops invading Ukraine.

Offer what we have. Not what we don't have.

At the same time, praying that God would open our eyes to see what it is that we do have to offer, which may be far more, and even different, than what we thought.

And then praying that God would open our hearts and open our hands to share it.

Bread.

A staple of life: a staple of my life, of your life, of our life.

Bread for life.  
Bread for body and for soul.  
*OUR* daily bread.

Will we affirm, and celebrate, that God provides enough for all? That God is good enough and big enough and gracious enough to provide for all our needs and all of us?  
Will we give thanks for God's abundant provision and all-pervading sustenance?  
Will we open our eyes to the ways in which God provides for all the world?  
And will we work together – and work together with God – so that all will truly benefit from God's providing for them and for us all?

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

### **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.  
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,  
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,  
and binds us together with all believers  
in the one body of Christ, the Church.  
The same Spirit  
who inspired the prophets and apostles  
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,  
engages us through the Word proclaimed,  
claims us in the waters of baptism,  
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,  
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.  
In a broken and fearful world  
the Spirit gives us courage  
to pray without ceasing,  
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.  
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,  
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks  
and to live holy and joyful lives,  
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,  
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

(from *A Brief Statement of Faith*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy...  
People: ...hear our prayer.

## **THE EUCHARIST**

### **OFFERING**

*Invitation*

*Reflection*

*\*Unison Prayer of Dedication*

**Gracious and Generous God,  
we are amazed by the good gifts you bestow in abundance.  
Thank you for food that sustains us on our journey.  
Thank you for the company of saints to whom we are joined.  
Thank you for giving us your work to do on earth.  
Most especially, we give you thanks and praise  
for the free and abundant gift of grace  
you have given us in Jesus Christ.  
Let the simple gifts of our lives  
be a sign of our unending gratitude  
for your undying love;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**\*HYMN “Loaves Were Broken, Words Were Spoken” GtG 498**

**1. Loaves were broken, words were spoken  
by the Galilean shore.  
Jesus, Bread of Life from heaven,  
was their food forevermore.  
By your body broken for us,  
by your wine of life outpoured,  
Jesus, feed again your people.  
Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.**

**2. Loaves were broken, words were spoken  
in a quiet room one night.  
In the bread and wine you gave them,  
Christ, you came as Light from Light.  
By your body broken for us,  
by your wine of life outpoured,  
Jesus, feed again your people.  
Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.**

3. Loaves are broken, words are spoken,  
as in faith we gather here.  
Jesus speaks across the ages:  
“I am with you; do not fear!”  
By your body broken for us,  
by your wine of life outpoured,  
Jesus, feed again your people.  
Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.

4. By the loaves you break and give us,  
send us in your name to share  
bread for which the millions hunger,  
words that tell your love and care.  
By your body broken for us,  
by your wine of life outpoured,  
Jesus, feed again your people.  
Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.

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## SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

*Invitation to the Lord’s Table*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Leader: Lift up your hearts.  
**People: We lift them to the Lord.**  
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*(The prayer continues...)*

*The Lord’s Prayer* (Traditional)

**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,**  
**forever. Amen.**



*Breaking of the Bread*

*Communion of the People*

*(With the passing of the bread, please wait until all have been served so that all may partake together, reflecting our unity in Christ.)*

“Feed Us, Lord” GtG 501

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**1. Feed us, Lord.  
Feed us, Lord.  
In the broken bread,  
be revealed again.  
Come and feed our hearts, O Lord.**

*(With the passing of the cup, please partake as soon as received as an expression of our personal relationship with Christ.)*

**2. Quench us, Lord.  
Quench us, Lord.  
On this thirsty ground,  
may your love flow down.  
Come and quench our hearts, O Lord.**

*Prayer*

**4. Lead us, Lord.  
Lead us, Lord,  
nourished here by Christ,  
given strength for life.  
Come and lead our hearts, O Lord.**

**SENDING**

**\*CLOSING HYMN** “All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly” GtG 509

**1. All who hunger, gather gladly;  
holy manna is our bread.  
Come from wilderness and wandering.  
Here, in truth, we will be fed.  
You that yearn for days of fullness,  
all around us is our food.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.**

**2. All who hunger, never strangers,  
seeker, be a welcome guest.  
Come from restlessness and roaming.  
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.  
We that once were lost and scattered  
in communion's love have stood.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.**

**3. All who hunger, sing together;  
Jesus Christ is living bread.  
Come from loneliness and longing.  
Here, in peace, we have been led.  
Blest are those who from this table  
live their lives in gratitude.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.**

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**\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

**Pastor:** ...And let the gathered people of God say...

**People:** ...Amen.

**POSTLUDE**

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