

Morning Prayer 25th July 2021

The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost / the Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Morning Worship with Christine Ghinn



Personal preparation before the service begins.

Please take time to remember where you are,
and why you are here.
Give thanks and become still
in the presence of God

Prelude

Welcome • Gathering • Call to Worship

Welcome in the name of Christ.
God's grace, mercy and peace be with us.
Amen.

We come believing in our emptiness,
believing that we will never have enough,
believing that what we have is unworthy.

We come fearful of sharing,
fearful of losing our tenuous grip on security,
fearful of touching and knowing the pain of others.

We come overwhelmed by the hunger,
overwhelmed by the suffering of children near and far,
overwhelmed by the endless tales of senseless
violence, greed, and death.

**We come aching from the weight of the
responsibility,**

aching from the chilling challenge of knowing our
abundance,
aching from the gnawing awareness that we have
much to share.

**We come clinging to our meager lunches;
bless them, and us.
break them, and us.
share them, and us.
Amen.**

Let us pray with words from Psalm 145:10-19

All your works praise you, O Lord, *
and your faithful servants bless you.

**They make known the glory of your kingdom *
and speak of your power;**

That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.**

The Lord is faithful in all his words *
and merciful in all his deeds.

**The Lord upholds all those who fall; *
he lifts up those who are bowed down.**

The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, *
and you give them their food in due season.

**You open wide your hand *
and satisfy the needs of every living creature.**

The Lord is righteous in all his ways *
and loving in all his works.

**The Lord is near to those who call upon him, *
to all who call upon him faithfully.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,

**As it was in the beginning,
is now and shall be for ever.**

Song: ACF 19

Come as you are, that's how I want you.
Come as you are, feel quite at home.
Close to my heart, loved and forgiven;
come as you are, why stand alone?

No need to fear, love sets no limits.
No need to fear, love never ends.
Don't run away, shamed and disheartened.
Rest in my love, trust me again.

I came to call sinners, not just the virtuous.
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail to live by my promise,
why do you think I'd love you the less?

Come as you are, that's how I love you.
Come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change the love that I bear you.
All will be well, just come as you are.

CCLI Song # 1504731
Deirdre Browne
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The Collect for today, the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost / Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Lord God,
your Son left the riches of heaven
and became poor for our sake:
when we prosper save us from pride,
when we are needy save us from despair,
that we may trust in you alone;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The reading is taken from Ephesians 3:14-21

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God

Our hearts and our minds are open

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading is taken from John 6:1-21

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Glory to you, O Lord

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing to you, our God. Amen.



This morning I brought a book along to show you. It is called “Freiburg Wimmelt” by Waldkirch-bred artist Steph Burlefinger.

This Wimmelbuch is full of gorgeous, dynamic drawings of people living their lives in Freiburg. I love Wimmelbücher, because on every page there is so much to discover. These books give a snap shot of people’s daily lives and if you take the time to get immersed in them, they make you wonder: Why is this child crying? What is that man chasing or running away from? What do those guys celebrate? What might be inside that bag, that box, that lorry?

To me, the four gospels are very much like these books. Each author has his own artistic style. They differ in what they depict, leave out and how they combine events. And finally: they leave a lot of space for us to wonder and to find ourselves in their drawings. The feeding of the 5000 – the story we’re thinking about today – lends itself to have appear before our inner eye as a Wimmelbild. Finding Wally (or Waldo) among 5000 men, plus women and children would be quite a task here!

If one of the evangelists would have been a visual artist, I’m sure we would find nursing babies, men in work clothes, stray cats, fighting five-year-olds, knitting

grannies, distracted teenagers and all sorts of other folks in the rendering of the happenings on that day.

But let's have a look at the individuals that are actually mentioned in today's reading:



There is Philip, whom Jesus rattles with the question: "Gosh, where are we going to organize a take-away from for this many people?" Philip is not so much concerned with the choice of food supplier ("Would these guys prefer pizza or kebab?"), but with the sheer amount of money that hosting a lunch for all of them would cost.

In my mind Philip looks a bit like this goal keeper at an SC Freiburg match who is being confronted with five balls at once.

I wonder how he felt, being put on the spot by Jesus: Ashamed? Angry? Annoyed? Surprised?

I wonder....



Next up, there is a little boy. John is the only one who includes him in his picture. The child seems to have heard some sort of rumor that food is needed, and he is more than happy to volunteer his packed lunch. Just like the little one in the picture shares crumbs with the sparrows on the Freiburg Christmas market, I imagine him being full of child-like optimism and generosity.

Looking at our Wimmel picture I'm wondering: Did all the other several thousand people forget their snacks because they were utterly captivated by Jesus? Or were they all too stingy to share the little they had? Maybe they would have shared, but word hadn't gotten around yet that food was needed?
I wonder...

John includes another person specifically, that is left out in the other three gospels: Jesus' disciple Andrew, who is the one that introduces the boy.
It took me a few minutes to spot Andrew in my picture book, but eventually I found him. There he is, by the side of the football pitch as a very involved, but slightly agitated commentator. John records him saying "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?"
Just like this football commentator, Andrew appears to me like one who does have a good overview of what's going on, yet can't help airing his own opinion on the

possibilities and impossibilities that might make or break the situation unfolding before him.

The image of Andrew pointing out the little boy makes me wonder: Did he initially see some potential in the boy's humble offering? Was he annoyed or heart-broken about the need around him? Did his voice carry some naïve flicker of hope or resound with harsh sarcasm?

I wonder...



And I carry on wondering about the rest of the crowd, about all those people that came out to see Jesus and ended up having an unexpected mega picnic.

I wonder if they turned up, filled with faith and hope, or came out of sheer sensationalism. Did all of them realise that the bread & fish they eat was the result of a miracle? Did some get healed? On how many of them did Jesus' presence and words have a lasting impact?

I wonder...



And then there is one more person I notice on the very edge of the picture of the Feeding of the 5000. She is not mentioned by name, but plays a crucial role in this miracle. Considering first century society, this person is fairly certainly a woman doing her ordinary day-to-day work of looking after those in her care. Like this lovely lady serving customers on the Münsterplatz, she is the one who provided the little boy with his lunch bag for the day. The boy's mother, older sister, granny or aunt did not in her wildest dreams imagine what a difference her small act of care would make.

I wonder how she reacted when the boy got back home that evening, recounting what had happened to his Fischbrötchen. Or maybe she too was with the crowds that day?

I wonder ...



Among all these different people stands Jesus, who is the focal point of the picture. In Mark's gospel we learn that Jesus' plan for the day hadn't been putting on a feast for thousands of people, but to get some rest. Leslie spoke last week on the interruptions life throws at us. Today we see Jesus letting himself being interrupted by hordes of people with growling stomachs. He is available and meets them where they are at, just like he does with us today.

The people on that mountainside, those throughout the ages, and you and I – we all keep on getting into these hopeless five-loaves-and-two-fish-situations. We can identify with these folks from the bible:

We all know what Philip's overwhelm feels like. We look at the challenges we are faced with, do the maths and realise that there is no way this will work out!

We know what it's like to be that little boy, to be filled with naïve eagerness and childlike optimism.

We have been Andrew, standing on the sidelines, commenting on what's going on.

We are the crowd too. We overlook the miracles that are happening around us, and we also know what collective awe and enthusiasm feel like.

And we are that caregiver, doing our ordinary day-to-day chores which might, without us knowing, at some point down the line result in some amazing deed of Christ.

In all four gospel accounts we notice that Jesus is the only person in the picture, whose motivations are described. He is the one we don't have to do much wondering about, because we learn that "he had compassion on them", "he welcomed them", "he knew what he was going to do", "he blessed and broke the loaves" and "he wants nothing to be wasted".

So, let's collectively and individually learn to "put Christ into the picture" in the Wimmelbuch that is our live and the story of all of creation. Let us keep our eyes open and take in the vibrant, weird, funny, intriguing, thought-provoking, exciting images that unfold all around us. Let us support the overwhelmed Philip beside us, praise those who share the little they have, speak kind encouragement to the Andrews on the sidelines, point out miracles to the crowds and celebrate with them, and show our appreciation to all the dependable lunch-bag-packers in our lives.

All of them and us are a colorful, needy bunch of people up on a hillside.
But there is Christ among us.
Let's try to spot him.
Let's point him out.
Let's count on him.
Amen.

Song: SoF 466

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like thee His praise should sing.
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King!

2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to his people in distress.
Praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.

Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Glorious in his faithfulness!

3 Fatherlike he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Widely yet his mercy flows!

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Intercessions (by Helen Rose)

The Lord's Prayer

In the language of our hearts, let us pray as our
Saviour taught us

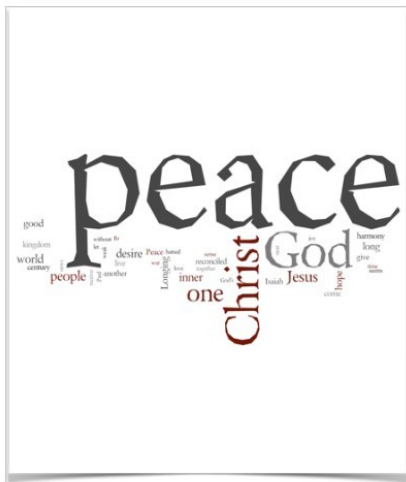
A sign of peace

God is love
And those who live in love live in God
And God lives in them.
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

Song: We seek your kingdom

We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere.
We long for heaven's demonstration here.
Jesus, your light shine bright for all to see.
Transform, revive, and heal society!

Before all things, in him were all things made,
Inspiring culture, media, and trade.
May all our work serve your economy.
Transform, revive, and heal society!



Peace, truth, and justice reigning everywhere,
With us be present in our public square.
Fill all who lead with your integrity.
Transform, revive, and heal society!

Forgive us Lord, when we have not engaged,
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page.
Make us again what we were made to be.
Transform, revive, and heal society!

Faithful to govern, ever may we be
Selfless in service, loving constantly.
In everything may your authority
Transform, revive, and heal society.

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The Blessing



Let's go now, to be nourished
in the love of God;
to be generous
in the way of Christ Jesus
and to be filled and fuelled
by the living Spirit.
And may the blessing of all three,
Creator, Saviour and Life-Force
be with us and those we love
today and always.
Amen.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude