

From your Council President – August 3, 2021

This past Sunday, August 1, 2021, was the definition of bittersweet, “An emotional feeling that is a mixture of both happy and sad.” After seven and a half years we said goodbye to the first female pastor in the history of Grace, Central and Holy Cross Lutheran Church. Many of you were there as we had over ninety people in attendance to hear the last sermon, “Manna & Mercy” from our beloved Pastor, the Reverend Patricia W. Hughes.

The service was wonderful, the full Voice Choir was there to sing beautiful farewell hymns and the Bell Choir played a rousing postlude. It was nice being back in the Sanctuary and hearing music! Pastor was even able to deliver her children’s sermon in person, around the baptismal font, to eight young people.

During the 2,766 days that Pastor Patricia has been our presiding minister she has conducted nearly 400 worship services, presided over 20 Baptisms, Confirmed 9 youth, conducted 7 Weddings and held 52 Funerals. She led us to connect with our neighbors, both community groups and fellow churches. We are stronger because of her efforts, and we will continue to build upon the foundations she leaves behind.

Alas, we, along with Pastor, would have wished for a different kind of final year than the one that the worldwide pandemic brought us, but we made the best of the hand we were dealt and have her to thank for coming up with the many ways we stayed in contact with one another and sustained our church family over the past seventeen months.

Now as Pastor P rides into the sunset (drives a car to Silverton) our church can look to the past with fond memories, and as inspiration for the task that lies before us. Our time of transition starts now.

We will have a few Sundays of visiting pastors before the Synod appoints and the Council accepts an Interim Pastor. Our Interim will help guide us through our self-analysis of our Congregation’s vitality and viability as we complete our Ministry Site Profile. Then, we will move on to forming a Call Committee.

As part of this transition, we will **NOT be holding any services this Sunday, August 8th**, but will return to service in the Sanctuary on Sunday, August 15th at 10:00 AM.

Your Council will be meeting to discuss our worship schedule, finalize the sale of the Easter House and vacant lot, and determine our next steps during the transition phase. Your thoughts are always welcome. Please call or email me directly with any questions or concerns you may have.

Blessing to you, your servant in Christ, Bryan Struve Council President

Manna and Mercy – During the pandemic, one of the things I missed most was eating with people. Having a few friends over for barbecue, or making the choice to stop at a restaurant when my spouse and I would be out getting errands done. Sharing holy communion at the altar rail. Good times. As Joni Mitchell says, “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got til its Gone.” Sharing food. As the months of pandemic have evolved, small concessions were made in our world in order to eat together. And this absence of shared, communal feeding has exposed a very human need, as well as a very holy one. As we look at the reading from Exodus today, we encounter the familiar tale of the Jewish people escaping slavery in Egypt only to experience hunger in the desert. A good and gracious God who has their welfare at heart, overlooks their frequent and pointed complaining, and provides quail in the evening, and manna in the morning to allow them to be fed, nourished and rejuvenated for the task which is before them. The people are still a bit confused, it seems, because they ask, “what is it?” instead of just stuffing their mouths with the stuff. Moses says, it is the bread that the lord has given you to eat. I am glad to remind you of this meaningful account of the chosen people, as we take a moment to ponder Holy Cross Lutheran Church, and my own tenure with you these last 7 ½ years. And bread that the lord has given us is a good place to start. In these past years, the memories that will stay with me are filled with Shrove Tuesday Pancake Suppers, so much fun, such great collaboration with other churches, and lots of young people, they are filled with Easter Dinners – a gathering that started with a few folks who had no major plans for dinner, but found a way to create a space for community, and care. My memories include Thanksgiving Eve dinners, that started small, with our friends at Manantial de Aguas Vivas, and, grew to be more than 200 mostly neighborhood people, fabulous tamales, turkey and more, and even featured a Mariachi band. My memories overflow with Holy Communion moments. The time ants had found their way to the chalice from which I drank, the time we were running out of wafers so I scanned the congregation to stare down the closest Altar care person to scamper back to the sacristy and bring more. The times when young people helped me offer communion, sometimes very young, who placed the wafer in the open hands in front of them, or offered the cup – and some of them even tried to say - the blood of christ shed for you. My memories include placing the bread in the palm of saints of God who have died, and I miss them. All that we have done together these years has been about the bread that the lord has given us to share. The account in today’s gospel goes into detail about the actions of the people who were witness to Jesus’ miracle of the loaves and fishes – an action that fed them miraculously. But, sadly, this miracle seems to have been received with some mixed messages – Jesus picks up on it – the witnesses to that miracle are looking diligently for Jesus, but not because they have found faith, but rather that they just want to be around when the next miracle happens – it made them feel special, I suppose. Jesus takes the time to remind them of the miracle of manna in the desert – not from Moses’ hand but from God’s hand, saying, for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. This is the big idea Jesus brings that changes things for all believers – when God feeds us, it’s not about us, or at least not just about us. God feeds us well, and joyfully, in order that we might offer life to the world – whether that be in food, in showing care and concern, or in direct personal outreach to folks who struggle. The bread from heaven, offered to us cannot be for ourselves alone. If we hoard it, or hang on to it, we are missing the point, and, like manna kept in clay jars for another day, it will certainly spoil. What am I talking about? Mercy. Mercy means - **“love that responds to human need in an unexpected or unmerited way.”** Like food. Like caring. Jesus shows us in these passages that once we truly experience mercy to its fullest, our open hands pass God’s bounty onto to the next soul, and the next, in true sharing. These pandemic months exposed a deep need within us all – a need for connection, for sharing, for being part of God’s mission of care in the world. Manna and Mercy. It’s what God is about. It is what we are about. Thanks be to God. Amen – Pastor Patricia+

**Worshipping at Home with Holy Cross Lutheran Church
August 8, 2021 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,

help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from the ways
of the world in which we live.**

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:

in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:

you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way,

Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of
all;

for this holy house, for all who worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way,

Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and
the poor;

that we may live out truth and justice and grace,

let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way,

Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.

For peace in our hearts, for peace in our homes, for friends and
family;

for life and for love, for our work and our play,

let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way,

Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.

For your Spirit to guide; that you center our lives in the water and
the Word;

that you nourish our souls with your body and blood,

let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way,

Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

**This is the feast of vict'ry for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.
Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.
Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are his.
This is the feast of vict'ry for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.
Sing with all the people of God,
and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.
This is the feast of vict'ry for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God, your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he may live in us and we in him, and that, strengthened by this food, we may live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

READINGS AND PSALM

1 Kings 19:4-8

Elijah given bread for his journey

Psalm 34:1-8

Taste and see that the LORD is good. (Ps. 34:8)

Ephesians 4:25--5:2

Put away evil, live in love

John 6:35, 41-51

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. I am the living bread that came [↓] down from heaven.*
Whoever eats this bread will [↓] live forever. *Alleluia.*

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 556 “Morning Has Broken”

APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

MEAL

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy

Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray. **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.**

BLESSING - HENRI FREDERIC AMIEL

Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind.

And Go in Peace to love and serve The Lord.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

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Prayers of Intercession

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

For the church of Christ in all its diverse forms. For mission developers, new mission starts, and all communities of faith exploring new models of ministry for the sake of the gospel. For congregations facing difficult decisions about their future. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the health and well-being of creation. For shade trees that provide refuge from the hot summer sun. For lakes, rivers, and oceans contaminated by pollution and all who lack clean water. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For those called to positions of authority in our legal system, we pray. For judges, lawyers, law clerks, and court employees who ensure the fair administration of justice. For corrections officers and prison chaplains, that they would deal mercifully with those who are incarcerated. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For all who cry out to you in their affliction. For exiles, refugees, and others who face long and difficult journeys, uncertain about the future. For all who mourn the death of a loved one. For all who are sick (*especially*). God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For this assembly gathered around your table, we pray. For those among us who bake bread and prepare the vessels for our communion celebration. For those who bring the food from this table to those who are homebound or hospitalized. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For those who have been raised to eternal life, we give thanks. With (*Dominic, name/s, and*) all the saints we praise you for the bread of life that keeps us in your love forever. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.