

# Sunday, August 5, 2018

## Lectionary 18

### Prayer of the Day

O God, eternal goodness, immeasurable love, you place your gifts before us; we eat and are satisfied. Fill us and this world in all its need with the life that comes only from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

### First Reading: Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

*A food crisis becomes a faith crisis for the Israelites in the wilderness. The hungry people forget God's saving work in the exodus, and they wish for the food they had in Egypt. Nevertheless, God miraculously meets their needs, with manna for bread and quail for meat.*

<sup>2</sup>The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

<sup>3</sup>The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

<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>9</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the LORD, for he 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.'"

<sup>13</sup>In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. <sup>14</sup>When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup>When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat."

### Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

*Christians share fundamental unity and diversity. Our unity consists in the one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Our diversity is expressed in various forms of ministry, whose goal is equipping the saints and building up Christ's one body.*

<sup>1</sup>I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

<sup>7</sup>But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup>Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people."

<sup>9</sup>(When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup>The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. <sup>14</sup>We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup>But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

## **Gospel: John 6:24-35**

*Many of the five thousand people Jesus fed in the wilderness continued to follow him throughout the countryside. Jesus challenges them to consider the real nature of their quest.*

<sup>24</sup>When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were [beside the sea,] they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

<sup>25</sup>When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" <sup>26</sup>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. <sup>27</sup>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." <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." <sup>30</sup>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? <sup>31</sup>Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " <sup>32</sup>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. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." <sup>34</sup>They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

<sup>35</sup>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."

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Trusting in our loving and almighty God who abundantly provides the bread of life to all who hunger, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Holy God, you give gifts and talents to every member of the church. Strengthen all your children and bring them to a full understanding and maturity in Christ. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Creator God, our complex and wonderful world is a sure sign of your abundance and care. Provide for every creature, and rain down the bread of heaven that gives life to the world. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Peaceful God, draw the nations of the world to harmony and mutual understanding. Bind all of humanity in the unity of love and peace that comes through the Spirit. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, we pray for those who are hungry, homeless, and who have lost family or friends. Lead them to places of safety, food, and rest. We pray especially for . . . . Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you have brought us all together in this time and place. Bless this congregation, including those who are absent, and draw us into closer communion with you, each other, and our community. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Infinite God, we praise you for the lives of those who have died in Christ. Keep our hearts in hope, for we have all received the food that endures to eternal life. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Almighty and loving God, we look to you in hope and trust, knowing that you will do far more than we can ask or imagine, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Sunday, August 12, 2018**

### **Lectionary 19**

#### **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.**

#### **First Reading: 1 Kings 19:4-8**

*First Kings chapter 18 describes the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The contest proves that the Lord is God, and afterward Elijah orders the killing of the Baal prophets. Angered by the deaths of her prophets, Queen Jezebel threatens to kill Elijah. This reading finds Elijah fleeing, fatigued, and in utter despair.*

<sup>4</sup>[Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."<sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat."<sup>6</sup> He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again.<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you."<sup>8</sup> He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

## **Second Reading: Ephesians 4:25--5:2**

*Christians are called to be imitators of God. This does not mean Christians are perfect. Rather, the Spirit is at work in our lives so that our actions and attitudes genuinely reflect the love and forgiveness we have received through Christ and his death.*

<sup>25</sup>So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.<sup>26</sup> Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,<sup>27</sup> and do not make room for the devil.<sup>28</sup> Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy.<sup>29</sup> Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption.<sup>31</sup> Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice,<sup>32</sup> and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

<sup>5:1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children,<sup>2</sup> and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

## **Gospel: John 6:35, 41-51**

*After feeding more than five thousand people in the wilderness, Jesus teaches them regarding the true significance of this remarkable sign.*

<sup>35</sup>Jesus said to [the crowd,] "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."<sup>41</sup> Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."<sup>42</sup> They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'"<sup>43</sup> Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves."<sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.<sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.<sup>46</sup> Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.<sup>47</sup> Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.<sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life.<sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.<sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.<sup>51</sup> I

am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Trusting in our loving and almighty God who abundantly provides the bread of life to all who hunger, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Lord God, we pray for the whole church. Sustain all who have tasted the bread of heaven and found solace in the promise of eternal life. Teach us to forgive one another in love and build each other up. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Lord God, save and protect your creation. Feed, nourish, and encourage all living creatures, and teach us to practice faithful stewardship. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Lord God, you rule the nations. Lead all people to speak truth and kindness to one another, walking in the paths of justice and peace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Lord God, we pray for those in need. Comfort those who mourn, encourage the fearful, and tend the sick (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Lord God, we pray for those gathered here today. Feed us well so that the difficult journey of life may not be too much, and sustain us through times of trial. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Lord God, we bless you for the lives of those faithful ones who have gone before us. Raise all at the last day, that we may exalt your name together. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Almighty and loving God, we look to you in hope and trust, knowing that you will do far more than we can ask or imagine, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

**Thanks be to God.**

# Sunday, August 19, 2018

## Lectionary 20

### Prayer of the Day

Ever-loving God, your Son gives himself as living bread for the life of the world. Fill us with such a knowledge of his presence that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life to serve you continually, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

### First Reading: Proverbs 9:1-6

*Wisdom is portrayed as a woman who invites people to partake of her banquet. Just as ordinary food is necessary for physical life, Wisdom's food—insight and understanding—is necessary for fullness of life with God. Partaking of Wisdom's banquet is the way to life.*

<sup>1</sup>Wisdom has built her house,  
she has hewn her seven pillars.

<sup>2</sup>She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,  
she has also set her table.

<sup>3</sup>She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls  
from the highest places in the town,

<sup>4</sup>“You that are simple, turn in here!”  
To those without sense she says,

<sup>5</sup>“Come, eat of my bread  
and drink of the wine I have mixed.

<sup>6</sup>Lay aside immaturity, and live,  
and walk in the way of insight.”

### Second Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20

*True wisdom integrates our new reality in Christ with our Christian fellowship and daily conduct. Because we are filled with the Spirit, Christians regularly rejoice together, give thanks to God for one another, and care for one another. In this way we revere our Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>15</sup>Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Gospel: John 6:51-58

*In John's gospel, the feeding of the five thousand leads to extended teaching in which Jesus identifies himself as the true “bread of life.” Finally, in these verses, he makes a connection that would not be understood until after his death, in light of the church's celebration of holy communion.*

[Jesus said,] <sup>51</sup>“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup>The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup>So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup>for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup>Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Trusting in our loving and almighty God who abundantly provides the bread of life to all who hunger, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

O Lord, you build your church, the body of Christ, and sustain it with living bread. Let wisdom guide your church, and teach all its members the way of righteousness. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

O Lord, bless the work of musicians, composers, writers, and all artists. Move us to even greater praise through their gifts of creativity. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we thank you for the diversity of the nations. Shower your wisdom and mercy upon all leaders and citizens. Give us all the courage to seek peace and pursue it. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

O Lord, send calm and perseverance to those who are in trouble or who live daily with great stress. Fill them with your Spirit and satisfy them with your presence (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we thank you for this congregation. Give us gratitude for the many blessings we enjoy, and inspire us to give thanks at all times. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

O Lord, we bless you for family, friends, and sisters and brothers in Christ who have guided us in wisdom and insight. Lead us into peace with all people until the day of Christ. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Almighty and loving God, we look to you in hope and trust, knowing that you will do far more than we can ask or imagine, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

**Thanks be to God.**

# Sunday, August 26, 2018

## Lectionary 21

### Prayer of the Day

Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

### First Reading: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

*In the Near East, covenant means agreement or alliance. It describes relationships and is the primary word used to characterize the relationship between God and Israel. By delivering Israel, God has already begun the relationship. Joshua calls upon the people to respond.*

<sup>1</sup>Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. <sup>2a</sup>And Joshua said to all the people, <sup>14</sup>“Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup>Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

<sup>16</sup>Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup>for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; <sup>18</sup>and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.”

### Second Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

*Like a general giving a rousing speech to troops before battle, this letter closes by calling on Christians to be equipped for spiritual warfare against evil. The full armor of God includes truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the gift of salvation, and the word of God inspired by the Spirit.*

<sup>10</sup>Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. <sup>15</sup>As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation,

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

<sup>18</sup>Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. <sup>19</sup>Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

## **Gospel: John 6:56-69**

*The “hard saying” that offends Jesus’ disciples is his claim that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. The followers who return to their old lives know something about how odd this sounds. Simon Peter, on the other hand, knows something about the scarcity of living, gracious words. He asks the most important question: “To whom shall we go?”*

[Jesus said,] <sup>56</sup>“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup>Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” <sup>59</sup>He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup>When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup>Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup>It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. <sup>65</sup>And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

<sup>66</sup>Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. <sup>67</sup>So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup>We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Trusting in our loving and almighty God who abundantly provides the bread of life to all who hunger, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

That God bless the church universal in every place, inspiring strength and courage to boldly proclaim the mystery of the gospel, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That God the creator bless wild animals and family pets, prairies and kitchen gardens, beaches and sandboxes, mountains and hearths, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That God spread the gospel throughout the nations of the world, announcing the words of eternal life to peoples in every land and country, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That God remember the poor and the brokenhearted and rescue all those in trouble (*especially*), let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

That God protect members of this congregation along all our ways and empower us to serve Christ in sincerity and faithfulness, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

That God redeem the lives of those who have served in the faith and raise them up, according to the promises of Jesus Christ, the bread that nourishes eternal life, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

Almighty and loving God, we look to you in hope and trust, knowing that you will do far more than we can ask or imagine, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

**Thanks be to God.**

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