

"...Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life"

- John 6:68

# St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – August 25, 2024

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Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning! Know that you are welcome here just as you are.

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time worshiping at St. John, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an \* and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**. All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.

At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:



You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. **Visitor information cards** and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.

As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then prefilled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

If you need a **restroom**, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

A **playroom** is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service. This room is by the elevator on the lower level. Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

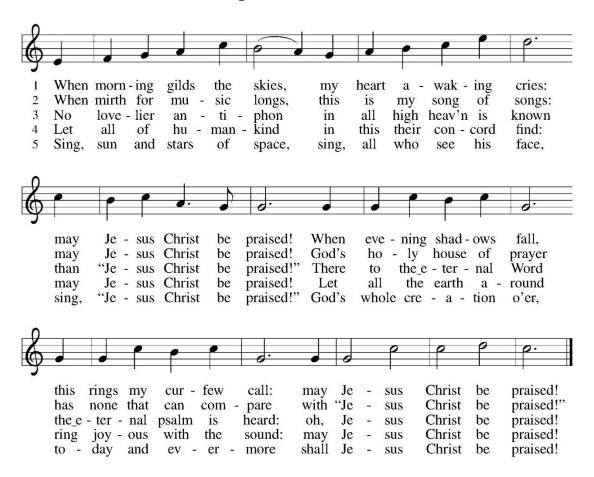
## **PRELUDE**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

# \*GATHERING SONG When Morning Gilds the Skies (ELW 853)



#### \*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity,  $\pm$  one God, The God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy. **Amen.** 

We admit our sins
Please pray with me.

Jesus, you spread out your arms to welcome the world. And then you tell us to feed them.

But we struggle with your command.

We find the seed of doubt growing in our hearts:

What is our compassion among so much pain? What is our small kindness in a system of injustice? What is one act of reconciliation in a divided society? How can so little food feed so many hungry mouths?

We have simply forgotten: when you ask us to feed the world, you always provide the bread.

Even when we have tasted the bread you multiply; even when we gather your leftovers, we still find ourselves between your wondrous power and our sinful reality.

We plead for God's forgiveness So we ask for your forgiveness.

When you call for our faith, forgive our unbelief.

As you prepare our heavenly dwelling, forgive our earthly worries.

When you offer us armfuls of food that satisfies, forgive our appetite for unhealthy fare.

When your gospel challenges us, forgive our irritable complaints.

You are patient with us even when we prove fussy and doubtful, reluctant and argumentative.

# How often do we act this way just because we are hungry?

We receive God's immediate forgiveness

People of God, Jesus knows you are hungry for forgiveness.

So Jesus has set our table with bread from heaven; and a feast to heal the soul.

You are forgiven. God leavens you with eternal goodness. Jesus gives you forgiveness enough to share. And the Holy Spirit fills your life with the flavor of transformation.

You are forgiven.

God, give us this bread always.

# \*Canticle of Praise This Is the Feast



## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Holy One,

sometimes, life feels chaotic and uncertain. It's hard to make sense of the things that happen to us. When we don't know where to find answers, when confusion sets us spinning, nudge us out of our spiral. Turn us back to you. Speak to us again with the words of eternal life. Repeat them gently until we understand. Amen.

## FIRST READING: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

A reading from Joshua.

<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."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

#### **PSALM: Psalm 34:15-22**

Read responsively – congregation reads bold printed verses

- <sup>15</sup> The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and God's ears are open to their cry.
- <sup>16</sup> The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to erase the remembrance of them from the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> The righteous cry, and the LORD hears them and delivers them from all their troubles.
- $^{18}$  The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those whose spirits are crushed.
- <sup>19</sup> Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the LORD delivers them from everyone.
- <sup>20</sup> God will keep safe all their bones; not one of them shall be broken.
- <sup>21</sup> Evil will bring death to the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be punished.
- <sup>22</sup> O LORD, you redeem the life of your servants, and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

# **SECOND READING: Ephesians 6:10-20**

A reading from Ephesians.

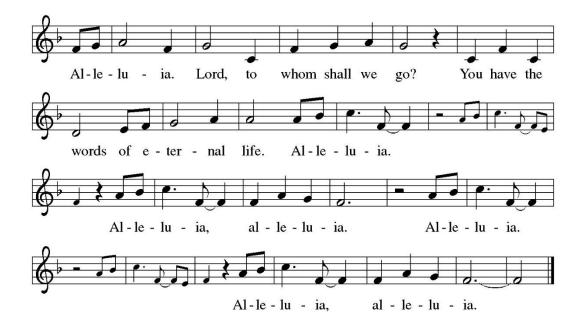
<sup>10</sup> Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## \*GOSPEL READING: John 6:56-69

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[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."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.** 

**CHILDREN'S SERMON** 

**SERMON** 

# \*HYMN OF THE DAY Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer (ELW 618)

(Blue prayer cards are collected)



## INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

We now welcome these persons who wish to join with this body of Christ, the people of St. John Lutheran Church. It is my pleasure to introduce to you Casey and Jon and Cate and Nick.

Casey and Jon, is it your wish to make this community of faith the people with whom you will share your journey of faith?

Is this the community with whom you wish to seek to make sense of your faith, the issues of your life, and who God calls you to be?

Is this the community where you wish to continue listening to the story of God's salvation and the Good News of Jesus Christ, and being nourished at the table of new life? Response: It is.

The presiding minister continues with prayer.

Let us pray.

Merciful God, we thank you for these people whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism, you have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith. Uphold your servants in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth.

We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

#### PROFESSION OF FAITH

The presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism.

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

Response: We renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

Response: We renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

Response: We renounce them.

\*The congregation is invited to stand as they are able.
The presiding minister addresses the candidates and the assembly.

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

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.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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.

#### \*AFFIRMATION

The presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism.

You have made public profession of your faith.

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Response: I do and I ask God to help and guide me.

The minister addresses the assembly.

Will you who are witnessing these promises, share the joys and sorrows, and do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ: Will you welcome these people into this faith family, embrace their gifts, their needs, and their dreams? Will you recognize that their presence and participation will change the shape of the body and help it grow in new ways? Will you support them in their journeys, and assist them in their ministries?

We will and we ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

Stir up in Casey, Jon, Cate, and Nick the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Amen.

A representative of the congregation addresses the assembly. Let us rejoice with our siblings in Christ.

We rejoice with you in the life of baptism. Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.

## \*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Calling on the spirit of Wisdom to guide our hearts and our minds, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence*.

Holy God, you have the words of eternal life. Lead the church to put its trust in Jesus, the living Word. Direct preachers, teachers, writers, and all the baptized in faithful speech and bold witness. Merciful God,

## receive our prayer.

Creator God, we and all creation are sustained by your Word. We pray for all who remind us of our interconnectedness with all living things. Prosper the work of conservation organizations, ELCA advocacy, and local climate justice advocates. Merciful God,

# receive our prayer.

God of wisdom, as our nation navigates another election cycle, guide our leaders to act justly for the sake of the world. Bring about fruitful conversation among your people and bring about change where you see fit. Sustain all who serve on juries in their deliberations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.** 

God of restoration, bring healing and wholeness to all who cry to you. Where pain is sharp, bring a sense of comfort and relief. Where grief runs deep, bring your tender mercy. Care for those on our hearts, especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, those on our prayer list, all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts and all who suffer in any way. Merciful God,

# receive our prayer.

God of new life, protect students and teachers for a new school year. Bring an end to school shootings and cycles of violence. Move us to do all that is necessary to ensure a safe future for our children. Merciful God,

## receive our prayer.

God of every generation, we remember with thanksgiving all who have completed their baptismal journeys. Strengthen us in our baptismal callings to serve you faithfully until our journey's end. Merciful God,

## receive our prayer.

We lift up these prayers to you, gracious God and those on the hearts and minds of this congregation this day (*blue prayer cards are read*). Receive these and the prayers for which we do not yet have words into your holy keeping. **Amen.** 

## \*EXCHANGE OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

## And also with you.

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

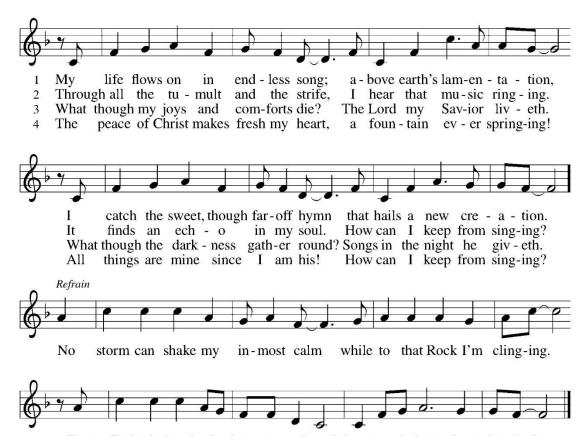
#### MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

## **OFFERING**

## OFFERTORY HYMN My Life Flows On in Endless Song (ELW 763)

Rise on 4th verse



Since Christ is Lord of heav-en and earth,how can I keep from sing-ing?

## \*OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Jesus, Bread of life, you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world.

#### Amen.

## \*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

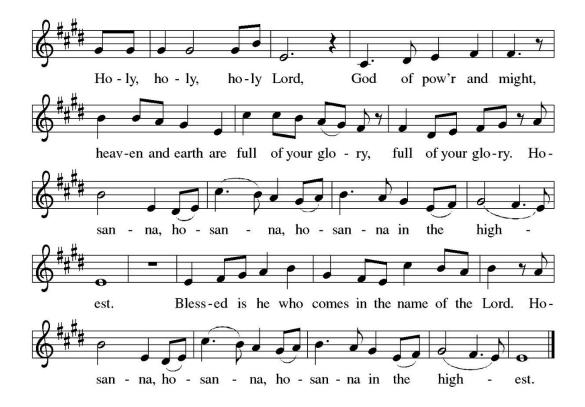
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



God of all, mighty and merciful, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

We thank you and praise you for you have satisfied the hunger of your people in every age: from the beginning you drew up food from the earth and humankind from the soil, filling our nostrils full of your Breath.

You ate the fatted calf with Abraham and Sarah, and answered their deep longing for a child; you sustained your chosen people with manna as you led them toward the promised land; you sent prophets to answer the cry for bread and for justice; and in fullness of time, you sent your own Son, Jesus Christ, the Bread of Heaven;

Who, in the night in which he was handed over, took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: The cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory to share with us the great and promised feast.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, And stir in us a hunger for justice and thirst for compassion. Open wide you hand and satisfy our deep desirefeed us with the Bread that is you. All honor and glory to you, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.** 

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

## \*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

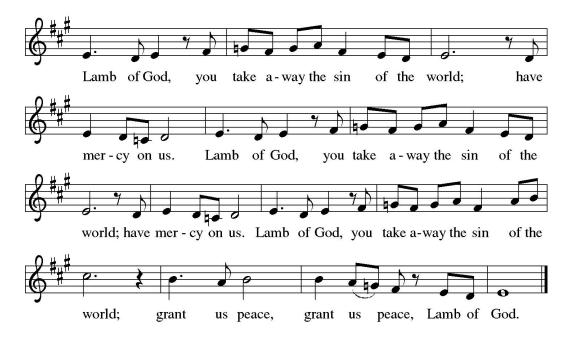
Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Taste and see that the Lord is good! Come!

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be

brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

# **COMMUNION SONG** Lamb of God



## **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

## **COMMUNION HYMN Blessed Assurance (ELW 638)**



- 1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!
- 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;
- 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,



Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir-it, washed in his blood. an - gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love. watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.



This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav - ior all the day long:



this is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

# COMMUNION HYMN Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup (ELW 492)



Eat this bread, drink this cup. Taste and see the good-ness of God.



Bread of life, cup of love,

we re-joice in your pres-ence.



- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times, praise with heart and voice;
- 2 Look up on the Lord, be ra diant, nev er turn a way.
- 3 An gels fold their wings a round us, guard through good and ill.
- 4 Saints of God, bow down and wor ship, bless the ho ly name.



in my God I glo - ry for - ev - er: lis - ten and re - joice! God will save in ev - 'ry af - flic - tion, hear us when we pray. Those who seek the Lord will lack noth-ing; taste, and have your fill. Rise to tell God's great-ness for - ev - er, won-drous deeds pro - claim!

## \*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in grace. Amen

## \*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. 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.** 

## \*BLESSING

The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, + be upon you now and forever. **Amen.** 

## \*SENDING SONG Praise Ye the Lord (ELW 872)



#### \*DISMISSAL

[Jesus said,] "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry..."

John 6:35

Fed and nourished, go in peace and love and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God.

## **POSTLUDE**

The flowers on the altar today were provided by Janet Senka in memory of her brother John J. Closshey.

**Assisting in worship today:** 

**Assisting Minister: Valerie Cardinal** 

Acolyte: Anna K

**Ushers:** 

Greeters: Ruth Ann Tully Offering: Ava N and Ella N Attendance last week: 51 + 6 zoom

## Notes for the day's texts:

"This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" (John 6:60). Jesus' teaching about eating his flesh and drinking his blood isn't something we can figure out and accept on our own. In his explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, Martin Luther writes, "I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him." The question of accepting Jesus' difficult teachings gets turned on its head. No one can accept it. The good news of Jesus is too radical, unsettling, and illogical for us to accept. Through the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit we are able to echo Peter's profession of faith: "You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69). Like Peter, we have come to believe—despite our doubts and weakness of faith—through the Spirit's work in the word.

## **Today's Music**

When Morning Gilds the Skies. Text: German hymn, 19th cent.; tr. Robert Bridges, 1844-1930, alt., Music: Joseph Barnby, 1838-1896. Public Domain. Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer. Text: William Williams, 1717-1791; tr. William Williams and Peter Williams, 1722-1796, alt., Music: John Hughes, 1873-1932. Public Domain.

My Life Flows On in Endless Song. Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899, Music: Robert Lowry, alt. Public Domain. Blessed Assurance. Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915, Music: Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830-1908. Public Domain. Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup. Text: Jeremy Young, b. 1948, refrain; With One Voice, stanzas, based on Ps. 34, Music: Jeremy Young. Augsburg Fortress.

Praise Ye the Lord. Text: J. Jefferson Cleveland, 1937-1986, based on Psalm 150, Music: J. Jefferson Cleveland. Estate of J. Jefferson Cleveland. Liturgy words and music taken from SundaysandSeasons.com Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. "The Gospel According to Bread" Confession and Forgiveness, Prayer of the Day, and Eucharistic Prayer by Barn Geese Worship is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

# **Next Week's Readings**

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 God's law: a sign of a great nation Psalm 15 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? James 1:17-27 Be doers of the word, not hearers only Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 Authentic Religion