

Home Service for August 2, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

God's love and grace welcome us here. Christ's bounty feeds us at his table.

Call to Worship:

My people are hungry. There are too many to feed.
Give them something to eat. We have only five loaves and two fish.
You have everything you need. It would take a miracle.
With God, all things are possible. In Christ, new hope has dawned.

Opening Prayer:

Even when our faith falters, O Lord, we will not let you go. Even though we are battered and bruised, O God, we will not let you go. Even when our bellies are empty, we know your presence will satisfy us. We need your blessing, O God, and we will not let you go. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

O God, listen to our prayer of confession, for we would speak honestly before You. We confess that we haven't always done what is right; that some of our attitudes and actions have hurt others and ourselves, and have grieved You. Forgive us. In Your mercy, look deeply into our hearts. Examine our thoughts and our actions. Test our motivations. Bring to light all the things in our lives that dishonor You. We want to follow You with integrity, to obey the commandments You have given us, and to walk in ways that bring honor to Your name. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Siblings in Christ, our God never fails to hear us when we call. Trust in God's forgiveness and unfailing love, and be at peace, for God rescues all who take refuge in God. Amen.

Read Psalm 17:1-7, 15

Hear me, Lord, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.
Hear my prayer—

it does not rise from deceitful lips.
² Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.
³ Though you probe my heart,
though you examine me at night and test me,
you will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.
⁴ Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what your lips have commanded.
⁵ My steps have held to your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.
⁶ I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.
⁷ Show me the wonders of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.
¹⁵ As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face;
when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Prayers of the People:

As the crowds followed Jesus, eager to be filled with hope, we come this day to this place, seeking nourishments for our souls. We hunger and thirst for the word of hope and truth, but our lives are battered by anger and hostility. Our hearts are filled with concerns for family and friends, for our country and our world. We don't see how we can be of help to others. Sit us down, as Jesus seated the multitude. Calm us down, as Jesus reassured the disciples that all would receive care. Lift us up, as Jesus encouraged others to reach out in compassion. Give us hearts of confident faith in your presence, O Lord. Place your hands of healing on the many situations which we have named with our voices and in our hearts. Lord, we ask your merciful goodness for these situations and these loved ones. It is in Jesus' name that we pray. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

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

Read the Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 32:22-31

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. ²⁴ So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

²⁷ The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

²⁸ Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, ^[a] because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

²⁹ Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, ^[b] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

³¹ The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, ^[c] and he was limping because of his hip.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Romans 9:1-5

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! ^[a] Amen.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 14:13-21

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Message

Today’s Gospel is titled, the feeding of the five thousand, is the only miracle Jesus preformed that is recorded in all four Gospels. Therefore, we can conclude this is a very important occurrence that we are not to overlook. It occurred during the Passover season about one year before Christ’s death. At the time, wherever Jesus went large crowds gathered.

Now at this time several things had happened. Remember, Jesus was just rejected by the people in His hometown, as a matter of fact; He departed the area as they were attempting to push Him off a cliff. His disciples had just returned from the mission field, a trip He had sent them on. To top it all off, word had just come to Him that Herod had beheaded His forerunner, John the Baptist. Not only was John His friend and partner in the ministry but also, he was Jesus’ cousin, His own flesh and blood. John’s mother, Elizabeth was cousin to Jesus’ mother, Mary. They were pregnant at the same time and even stayed together before Jesus was born.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that John leaped within his mother’s womb when Mary arrived, bearing Jesus in her own. The two men are bound by blood and by spirit. And now John was dead. When Jesus heard the news. He needed to be alone. It feels like one of those moments where we can fully appreciate Jesus’ humanity, and he fully felt the weight of ours. I suspect he was rattled. In shock. Deeply sadden. Maybe even angry. Think about it, what a tragic end for his bold, young, faithful cousin and friend. Grief had come running at him headlong, and now he needed to get away. Maybe to clear his head. Maybe to cry out to God.

Jesus just needed time to get away, time to be alone, to grieve, to pray, to rest, to be with the disciples and hear about their experiences on the mission field and to teach them. He knew they also needed time to recharge their batteries.

So, Jesus and the disciples got into a boat and crossed the Sea of Galilee to what they thought would be a deserted place to be alone with hope of some quiet time, time to decompress. But when the people heard that Jesus had departed, they followed on foot. When Jesus disembarked and saw that the crowds had followed them, how did He react? Did He get back into the boat and go further away? Did He get upset that He wouldn't get any rest or time alone with the disciples?

No, He had compassion for them and began to cure them from any and all afflictions they had. Just like He will have and has compassion for each of us. All we have to do is turn to Him and put our trust in Him. He will take care of all our needs, now notice I did not say that He will take care of all our wants, but He will provide the necessities of life. The grief that had flooded Jesus' heart as he sought his solitude now takes a backseat as compassion begins to well up and overflow. He takes a deep breath, rises to his feet and walks across the field to bring healing to those who need it.

There were two distinguishable evenings recognized in the Jewish culture during Jesus' time, the first being around 3:00 pm and the second being at sundown. Now when the first evening came, the disciples knew the crowds would soon grow hungry, as their own stomachs were probably starting to growl. So, they came to Jesus and said, send these people away, Lord. It is getting late and time for dinner and we have no way to feed them, so send them on their way now. Let them go to the villages and fend for themselves! Now here they are talking to the Christ, the Son of God. God who had provided manna and water in the desert for the children of Israel.

But the disciples still did not understand who Jesus really was and he assured them there was no need to send the crowd away. Why should the people leave when the One who opens His hand and supplies the desire of every living thing is present? Jesus really catches the disciples off guard by saying, "You give them something to eat." Can you imagine the look on the disciple's faces; they must have been floored? "Give them something to eat? We have nothing but five loaves and two fish." They however have forgotten, just like we do, they also had the Christ, Jesus the Son of God.

Patently Jesus says, "Bring them here to me." Then, we can just imagine, Jesus having the crowds to sit down on the grass. Now, I expect that you have already figured out there were more than five thousand people present. The title feeding of

the five thousand is very misleading but Matthew tells us it was five thousand men plus women and children. For all we know if each man had a wife, and just one or two children the numbers could have been more like 10,000, 15,000 or 20,000 or more people present.

So, Jesus takes the five loaves and two fish, stands looking to the heavens, probably with His arms raised, giving thanks and breaks the loaves and gives it to the disciples and tells them to feed my people. That is exactly what they did and there was plenty for all. When they were all satisfied, the disciples gathered what was left and there was twelve baskets full. Think about it, there was more left over when Jesus finished than when He began. Ironically enough there was a basket for each doubting disciple.

The miracle is a spiritual lesson for disciples of every generation. The hungry multitude is always present. There is always a little band of disciples with seemingly pitiful resources. And always there is the compassionate Savior. When disciples are willing to give Him their little all, He multiplies it to feed thousands. The notable difference is that the thousands who were fed by Galilee had their hunger satisfied only for a short time; those today that feed upon the living Christ are satisfied forever.

This is a miracle story about people who were hungry, and then they were not. God's story throughout scripture is a story that insists that God's hungry people should be fed. Jesus is bringing the vision of God to life – the vision they knew from the prophets, from the psalms, from the story of Moses they had known since they were children. The manna in the wilderness had become bread and fish there in that deserted place that day.

The moral of today's Gospel is: worry not about what little you have to give. Whatever it is, God will bless it and spread it to the glory of God's kingdom. Do not worry about the future anymore. You provide the bread. Let God take care of the miracle. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Benediction:

*Beloved of God, go now in peace to make peace.
Go, reaching out in love, extending the hand of grace
and life to those in need.
Go with the blessing and power of Almighty God—
Father, Son, Spirit. Amen.*