

## October 10th, Harvest Thanksgiving

### Opening Collect

Generous God,  
you brought us into the abundance of our inheritance.  
Grant us the faith to be the people of God,  
blossoming with honour and truth,  
so that we might produce bountifully  
the first-fruits of justice and compassion,  
which are pleasing in your sight.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord  
who with you and the Holy Spirit  
is one God, now and for ever.

**Deuteronomy 26:1-11:** *We read part of what is known as Moses' final speech before God's people entered the Promised Land. We hear a creedal statement recalling God's freeing the people from slavery. This action by God prompted the believer to offer only the best, the choicest and costliest sacrifice ("first fruits") to God. The action of offering ends in celebration!*

when thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein;  
That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there.  
And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us.  
And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God.  
And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:  
And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:  
And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:  
And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:  
And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that

floweth with milk and honey.

And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God:

And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

**Philippians 4:4-9:** *Like the people of Israel, God has freed us too, from the demands of the Law, and from the power of Sin and of Death. This leads us to rejoice always “in the Lord” and to act with gentleness with each other, just as the Lord, whose return we anticipate, has acted gently toward us. Finally, Paul exhorted us to keep on doing the “work” of faith. In such works we know the peace and presence of God – yes even in pie making, chancel guild work, Bible Study and committee meetings, it’s true!*

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

**John 6:25-35:** *Speaking of works, Jesus told us that the work of God is that we believe in him! (Faith is the work of God in our lives not something into which we can think ourselves) This reading follows the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. The next day, the folks (probably getting hungry again) found Jesus who told them to work for the “bread” that leads to eternal life, that is, faith in him. This is affirmed when Jesus told the people that he is the bread of life that satisfies our true hungers and thirsts.*

When the crowd had found Jesus on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not

because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

“You are what you eat,” we say. I’m not sure what that means exactly. I think it’s supposed to mean that it’s good to eat good food, a version of “garbage in, garbage out.” But it’s not literally true. When I eat broccoli, I don’t become broccoli. When I eat a steak, I don’t become a cow. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. What you eat becomes what you are. All the proteins, vitamins, minerals, sugars, fats of your food become part of you.

OK, now that I’ve stirred your appetites a bit for food, let’s talk about another kind of food. Not the food that becomes what you are, but the food that transforms you, the food that gives eternal life. Of course, I’m speaking of Jesus, who called himself “the Bread of Life” and “living Bread come down from heaven.”

Spiritual food for eternal life. All your other food, you eat to your death. That’s the outcome of Adam and Eve’s eating the food that was forbidden. And each of us is part of that death. Wonder Bread may build strong bones and healthy bodies 12 ways, but it can’t ward off death even in the healthiest of bodies. Even that miracle manna bread couldn’t save the Israelites from death in the wilderness. But Jesus, the Bread of Life, is an entirely different food on our diet. He is the Bread that conquers death; he is the Bread that overcomes our affliction; he is the Bread that brings life out of his own death. He builds life forever one way: by his death and resurrection.

To eat is to believe. To trust in Jesus is to live off of his life and death. To say, “Not my works, Lord, but your work. Not my sacrifices, but your sacrifice. Not my crosses, but your cross. Not my blood, sweat, and tears but your blood, sweat and

tears are what save me from my sins, from my death, from hell itself. I cannot save myself. I can only dig myself deeper into my own grave. But you, dear Son of God, sent by the Father, you have become a human being, a man born of a human mother, to save my own wretched flesh from the grave. And baptized into you, clinging to your promise, I have eternal life now, and I have this promise that keeps me: 'I will raise you up on the Last Day.'

Only the flesh and blood of God become Man can save your flesh and blood from the grave that is our lot in life. Only the blood of God's Son can cleanse from sin. Only the flesh of God's Son, offered up for the life of the world, can raise your flesh from the grave. Faith in Christ feeds on his death, much the way scavenger birds feed on roadkill. Jesus said of His kingdom, "Where the carcass is, there the vultures will gather." Where the death of Jesus, there the faithful gather to eat and live off the one Death that brings life.

With this food, you are what you eat.

*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

### **Concluding Prayers:**

#### **Let us pray for the church:**

God who gives bread from heaven;  
give life to the world.

We pray especially for our bishop, Todd.

With faith in Jesus may we, and all the baptized,  
work for food that endures for eternal life. :

#### **Let us pray for a harvest for all the earth:**

Give a harvest good with grain.

Bless Charles, our king, and all in authority  
so that everyone has their fill.

Let us share wealth wisely  
and harden not our hearts.:

#### **Let us pray for the poor and hungry:**

Raid down bread from heaven.

End famine in the lands.

May we declare to generations to come  
that with a display of power and with signs and wonders  
that it is you who has brought us to this land of abundance.

**Let us pray for a joyous spirit:**

May we rejoice in the Lord always  
and let our gentleness be known  
not just in word  
but in deeds of healing and compassion.

Make us keep on doing the things  
we have learned from you.

We pray for those who have asked for our prayers,  
especially (*the names in the bulletin are read here*). *We pray to the Lord:*

**Let us remember our beloved dead before God, In whom they still live:**

May the Beloved come to their inheritance,  
and appear with Christ in glory.  
Let the peace which surpasses all understanding  
guard their hearts and minds. *We pray to the Lord:*

God of faithful bounty  
we trust in you alone.  
Give to your Church that joy and peace  
that comes from knowing  
that you hear our prayers.  
Touch us with your love  
that we might always turn our thankful hearts to you  
and praise your name.  
As you once fed your faithful people  
with manna from heaven,  
even now feed us with the bread of eternal life.  
We praise you, bless you, and thank you  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**For our Parish.**

O GOD the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful: Sanctify this parish by thine  
abiding presence. Enlighten the minds of thy people more and more with the light  
of the everlasting Gospel. Bring erring souls to the knowledge of God our Saviour;  
and those who are walking in the way of life, keep steadfast unto the end.

Give patience to the sick and afflicted, and renew them in body and soul.  
Guard from forgetfulness of thee those who are strong and prosperous.

Increase in us thy manifold gifts of grace, and make us all to be fruitful in good works; O blessed Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. *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, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you  
always. *Amen*