

# THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 22nd, 2021



## CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

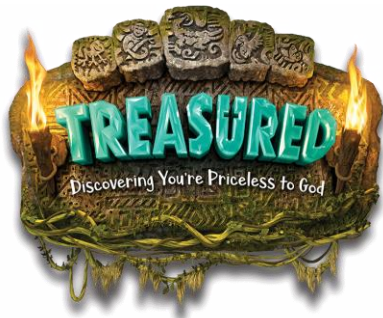
140 Russell Avenue  
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1  
Church: 905-685-8294 Fax 905-685-7661  
[www.christlutheransc.ca](http://www.christlutheransc.ca)



**Online VBS:** “TREASURED: DISCOVERING *YOU'RE PRICELESS TO GOD*”.

If you or someone you know think they missed out on this year's VBS ... start smiling! It's online, which means you can access it from our church website (www.christlutheransc.ca) until August 30. You can even watch one day each week until the end of August (which gives more time to memorize the bible verses!)

To receive the "special pack" which includes all 5 Bible Verse Memory Buddies, materials for all 5 crafts, ideas and extra supplies for the games, simply register your child by emailing secretary@christlutheransc.ca or by calling the church office at 905-685-8294 or Louise at 905-329-8579 and we will help you make arrangements to come and pick it up from the church.



You are invited to our “online VBS”

**“TREASURED:**  
*Discovering You're Priceless to God”*

You'll discover Gods greatest treasure isn't gems, silver or gold - IT'S YOU!!

Join us online for Bible learning activities, catchy songs, games and crafts. Collect Bible Memory Buddies that help remind us of God's love.

**LINKS TO ALL 5 DAYS:**

**Day 1**

<https://youtu.be/BVx246ZB7HM>

**“VBS TREASURED: Discovering you're priceless to God”**

**Day 2**

<https://youtu.be/BVx246ZB7HM>

**“VBS TREASURED: Discovering you're priceless to God”**

**DAY 3**

<https://youtu.be/ym1ri7bAG6k>

**“VBS TREASURED: Discovering you are priceless to God.”**

**DAY 4**

<https://youtu.be/JIOnlfeEK1g>

**“VBS TREASURED: Discovering You are Priceless to God.”**

**DAY 5**

<https://youtu.be/YJrxAww05Gk>

**“VBS TREASURED: Discovering You're Priceless God.”**

**VOTER'S MEETING: Sunday, September 19th, 2:00 pm – Voters Meeting (tentative based on public health restrictions). Election of Church Council and ratification of Council decisions made under COVID-19 restrictions.**

**MOVING FORWARD** - As we continue in Stage 3 of COVID 19 restrictions and the community is continuing to be vaccinated, we are still left with the Delta variant actively circulating in our community and elsewhere. We would like to ensure that the membership is comfortable with and still wish to move towards having two (2) services each Sunday with the eventuality of resuming activities and programs between services. Should you have a preference one way or the other, please share your views and preferences with either Pastor or a member of council. The first week for two services is presently scheduled for **Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021**. If necessary, this matter will be placed on the Agenda for discussion at the Voter's meeting tentatively scheduled for **September 19<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.**

**Last Sunday Attendance: Aug. 15th, 2021 Attn: 10 a.m. – 63**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or - (--)</u>
Current:	271,175.00	5,214.90	2,627.00	123,588.61	(48,503.22)
Missions	20,000.00	384.62	282.00	11,138.00	(1,554.31)
Property Improvement:			31.00	3,712.00	

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS** have been given to Christ Lutheran Church in memory of **Michael Duga** by Tom & Kathy Kuhl; in memory of **Erna McBride** to HLMS Mixte Nazareth Feeding Program by Rev. Frank & Mary Silver, Rev. Gary & Wendy Kuenzel, Steve Duga, Helen Stark, Paul & Judy Mason, Tom & Kathy Kuhl, Anna Schneikart and Mark & Karen McCumber.

**FLOWERS FOR ALTAR:** If you would like to place flowers on the altar, please sign your name at the back of the church or email: [secretary@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:secretary@christlutheransc.ca). Cost is \$25/bouquet

**THE CANADIAN LUTHERAN:** The Canadian Lutheran is available to read online at: [WWW.CANADIANLUTHERAN.CA](http://WWW.CANADIANLUTHERAN.CA)

**SUPPORTING YOUR CHURCH DURING THE PANDEMIC:** It's important for members to keep in mind that expenses for payroll, utilities, maintenance, etc. continue to accumulate even when you are not comfortable attending service.

**1. THROUGH EFT DONATIONS:** Lutheran Church - Canada, East District Corporation continues to facilitate this service for us. To assist you in continuing your financial support to your church, we encourage you to fill out the form that is available for printing at:

[http://christlutheransc.ca/?page\\_id=96](http://christlutheransc.ca/?page_id=96) and then mail the form along with a voided cheque to:

Lutheran Church-Canada, East District Corporation  
275 Lawrence Ave., Kitchener, ON N2M 1Y3  
Attn: Darryll Holland

**2. BY MAIL:** cheques can still be mailed to:

Christ Lutheran Church  
140 Russell Ave. St. Catharines, ON L2R 1W1  
or dropped in the Church mailbox at the East entrance.

**3. ONLINE VIA LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA:** Lutheran Church-Canada has opened a web portal that allows parishioners to donate directly to their home church:

<https://lutheranchurch-canada.tng-secure.com/?pagelid=donation-edit&categoryid=10972>

select "St. Catharines-Christ Lutheran-30950" from the drop down menu, enter the amount of your donations and LCC will transfer your donation to Christ. Donation is via VISA or Mastercard. Tax receipts will be issued by LCC (not Christ).

This opportunity will be in effect until the COVID-19 emergency is over.

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CREATIVE COMMUNION  
The 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
August 22, 2021 + 10 AM Blended**

GATHERING SONG:                    *“You Satisfy The Hungry Heart”*                    [*“How Sweet The Name”* tune]

**1. You satisfy the hungry heart with gift of finest wheat,  
Come give to us, O saving Lord, the Bread of Life to eat.**

**2. With joyful lips we sing to You, our praise and gratitude,  
That You should count us worthy Lord, to share this Heav’nly Food.**

**The myst’ry of Your presence Lord, no mortal tongue can tell;  
Whom all the world cannot contain, comes in our hearts to dwell.**

*Words: Omer Westerdorf, 1916-1997; Music: Alex Reinagle, 1861; ST. PETER*

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of Your people,

**Turning us from our sin to live for You alone.**

Give us the blessing of Your Holy Spirit,

**that we may confess our sins, receive Your forgiveness,**

and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ,

**our Saviour and Lord. Amen.**

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another:

*[brief silence for personal confessions]*

Gracious Father,

**Have mercy on us. We confess that we have sinned and turned ourselves away from Your holy face. We are truly sorry for all that we have done wrong and humbly repent. In Your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to You, and uphold us by Your Spirit, so that we may live and serve You in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God our Father, Who is rich in mercy, loved you even when you were dead in sin, and made alive together with Christ our Lord. By grace you have been saved. By the holy command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LORD HAVE MERCY

**O Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy, hear us and give us Your peace. Amen.**

PRAISE HYMN:                    *“Glory Be To God On High”*

Glo-ry be to God on high, for this our joy-ful cry! Give  
 peace to all who live on earth, with grace for our new birth!  
 We praise and glor-if - y, and wor - ship, Lord most high. Our  
 Grac - ious Fa - ther, Heav`nly King, to You a-lone we sing.

**Christ Jes - us, Ho - ly One, the Fath - er`s on - ly Son,  
 Came down to earth from realms on high, born man for us to die.  
 O Lamb of God, we pray, take all our sins a - way,  
 With Spir - it, Fath - er, God a - bove, we praise Your glo - rious love!**

Words: Bradford Scott © 1991 From a `New Hymnic Setting of Divine Service 3` (98-2989) Concordia Publishing House, USA; Music: Franklin Shepherd, 1852-1930 [www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org) This is My Father`s World tune (TERRA PATRIS)

**GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

The Lord be with you:

**And also with you.**

Let us pray: Almighty and eternal God, help us to grow in faith, hope, and love. Move us so to love what You teach us and so then give us all that You promise. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE**

**The Old Testament** *Isaiah 29: 11-19*

The vision of all this has become for you like the words of a sealed document. If it is given to those who can read, with the command, 'Read this', they say, 'We cannot, for it is sealed.' And if it is given to those who cannot read, saying, 'Read this', they say, 'We cannot read.' The Lord said: Because these people draw near with their mouths and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote; so I will again do amazing things with this people shocking and amazing. The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden. Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the Lord, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, 'Who sees us? Who knows us?' You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay? Shall the thing made say of its maker, 'He did not make me'; or the thing formed say of the one who formed it, 'He has no understanding'? Shall not Lebanon in a very little while become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest? On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the neediest people shall exult in the Holy One of Israel. This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Epistle: Ephesians 6: 10-20**

[St. Paul writes:] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. 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. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. 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. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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. 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, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak. This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Spoken Gospel Verse**

**Alleluia! Lord, to Whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**The Holy Gospel St. John 6: 56-69**

The Holy Gospel, according to St. John, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter:

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

Jesus says: All those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. 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 for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 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. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ!**

**THE NICENE CREED**

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life + of the world to come. Amen.**

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away,  
Slain for us: and we remember:  
The promise made that all who come in faith  
Find forgiveness at the cross.  
So we share in this Bread of life,  
And we drink of His sacrifice,  
As a sign of our bonds of peace  
Around the table of the King.

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
Torn for you: eat and remember  
The wounds that heal, the death that brings us life,  
Paid the price to make us one.  
So we share in this Bread of Life,  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of love  
Around the table of the King.

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin,  
Shed for you: drink and remember  
He drained death's cup that all may enter in  
To receive the life of God.  
So we share in this Bread of Life,  
And we drink of His sacrifice,  
As a sign of our bonds of grace  
Around the table of the King.

*Stuart Townend, Keith & Kristyn Getty Copyright © 2007 Thankyou Music (Adm. by CapitolCMGPublishing.com excl. UK & Europe, adm. by Integrity Music, part of the David C Cook family, songs@integritymusic.com)*

MESSAGE:

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the Holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who labour, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

We pray especially for... [*specific petitions offered now...*]: let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**



For these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord. Have mercy.**

Blessed Lord God, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Help us so that we may hear, read, mark, learn and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, Who lives and reigns with You, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **THE SACRAMENT [SPOKEN]**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts!

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good, right and joyful that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus 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 all the company of Heaven, we praise Your name and join their un-ending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

[Tune: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God"]

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho -- ly, Lord God Al - migh - ty,  
Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout glo-ries of Your name.  
Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho -- ly, sing -- ing Ho - san -- na!  
Bles -- sed is He Who comes in our Lord's name.

THE LORD'S PRAYER "*Our Father, Who art in Heaven....*"

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying: "Take, eat; This is My + Body which is given for you, this do, in remembrance of Me. In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying "Drink of it all of you, this cup is the New Testament in My + Blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always:

**And also with you.**

LAMB OF GOD



O Jes-us Chri-st, True Lamb of God; the sins of the world, You

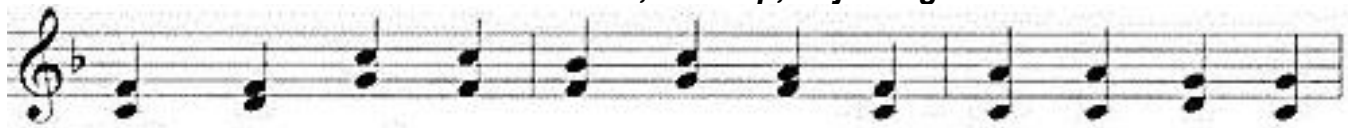


Take a -- way. Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray;



And bless us with Your peace; A -- men

**COMMUNION HYMNS: "Praise The Lord, Rise Up, Rejoicing"**



1 Praise the Lord, rise up re - joic - ing, wor - ship, thanks, de -



-vo - tion voic - ing: Glo - ry be to God on high!



Christ, Your cross and pas - sion shar - ing, by this Euch - a -



-rist de - clar - ing Yours the fin - al vic - to - ry.

2 Scattered flock, one Shepherd sharing, lost and lonely, one voice calling,  
Ears attentive to Your Word;  
By Your Blood new life receiving, in Your Body, firm believing,  
We are Yours, and You the Lord.

3 Sins forgiven, wrongs forgiving, we go forth alert and living  
In Your Spirit, strong and free.  
Christ-like in Your vast creation, serving all in our vocation,  
May we faithful foll'wers be.

Words: Nurnberg Gesang-Buch, 1676; trans. Catharine Winkworth 1829-78 – Reprinted from [www.hymnary.orgLBW](http://www.hymnary.orgLBW) [Tune: All Depends On Our Possessing]

"Shepherd of Souls" [Tune: Jesus The Very Thought Of You]

Shepherd of souls, refresh and bless  
Your chosen pilgrim flock,  
With manna in the wilderness,  
With water from the rock.

We would not live by bread alone,  
But by that word of grace,  
In strength of which we travel on  
To our abiding place.

Be known to us in breaking bread,  
But do not then depart;  
Saviour, abide with us, and spread  
Your table in our heart.

Lord, sup with us in love divine;  
Your body and Your blood,  
That living bread, that heavenly wine,  
Be our immortal food.

SONG OF SIMEON:

*“Let Your Servant Depart”* [tune: Sweet By & By]  
Let your servant depart now in peace,  
For Your Word from of old is fulfilled,  
Your salvation my eyes now have seen,  
Long-prepared as it always has been.

In Your light, you reveal, the world’s promise and Israel’s great joy!  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always may You be adored.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER:

Let us pray: Almighty God, Who has given Your Son, Jesus Christ, as a Sacrifice for sin and the True Example of a godly life, give us grace that as we have received Him in the Holy Communion Feast we may daily abide in Him, hearing and believing His Holy Word and living out our days in peace and joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Let us praise the Lord!  
**Thanks be to God!**

BENEDICTION:

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord upon you with favour, + and give you peace. **Amen.**

*"God Will Take Care Of You"*

**1 Be not dismayed whate'er betide,  
God will take care of you;  
Beneath his wings of love abide,  
God will take care of you.**

**Refrain:**

**God will take care of you,  
Through ev'ry day,  
O'er all the way;  
He will take care of you,  
God will take care of you.**

**3 All you may need he will provide,  
God will take care of you;  
Nothing you ask will be denied,  
God will take care of you. [Refrain]  
God will take care of you,  
Through ev'ry day,  
O'er all the way;  
He will take care of you,  
God will take care of you.**

**4 No matter what may be the test,  
God will take care of you;  
Lean, weary one, upon his breast,  
God will take care of you. [Refrain]  
God will take care of you,  
Through ev'ry day,  
O'er all the way;  
He will take care of you,  
God will take care of you.**

*Civilla D. Martin (1904) Nova Scotia - Public Domain*

**REV. TODD HOEFFS**

**The 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (B)**

**Sermon: St. John 6:56-69**

**August 22, 2021**

**Title: "Eating Our Words"**

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Words. We use them all the time. Conversations have words.

Cards, letters, emails and texts have typed or handwritten words.

My sermon manuscript is full of words. Words get used and abused all the time and have a wide variety of meanings. The internet, Facebook & twitter are filled with words

Sometimes contradictory words creating contradictory thoughts all at the same time.

The right word at the right time can bring great comfort. The wrong word at the wrong time can deliver distress. With our words we make promises, we marry, we encourage, we hurt, we build up, we tear down, we destroy. Meanings of words change all the time.

How often are the words "love" or "happy" thrown around with little or no thought?!

I remember a time in my 1<sup>st</sup> call out west at a regional Lutheran event.

There was a church meal [which I was very used to] and I called it a "POT-LUCK".

Oh my, the reaction I got from that was so unexpected! LUCK was like a 4 letter curse word!

Pot BLESSING was the term I was "expected" to use. But Blessing shouldn't be used as a nice neat little cover word for luck, as if luck is bad. God uses luck just as he would any other aspect of life and time in our lives. BLESSING in scripture isn't even aligned with material or earthly things.

BLESSING is always tied to faith. Faith in Christ is our best gift and only true blessing.

Grace is a blessing. The best we can say about our possessions is a humble gracious

Attitude of thankfulness that God enables us to work and earn a living so that we can have material goods in our lives. That doesn't make us blessed But privileged Which means we as stewards of such gifts are expected to understand what we've been given and in turn give and serve all that much more! Which really is the point of the reaction Jesus is expecting from the crowds In Capernaum after being fed with the loaves and fish. Don't strain for the things that die. Yearn for the thing that never dies. Be grateful for what God has given freely. Treasure Jesus as the Living Bread that came down from Heaven. Jesus as the Living Word of God – the word these crowds heard read in their synagogues this living Word in the person of Jesus is God's physical word to them come to deliver them from all their sins and connect them forever into the Heavenly Kingdom.

Jesus is connecting the feeding in the wilderness to the future feeding in the pastured fields in Heaven's paradise. Where no one hungers or thirsts any longer. These Words are Spirit and Life.

Words of eternal life. Hard words. All who eat his flesh and drink his blood will have a life in Him as He has a life with in us. And that whoever does this will live forever.

These are the difficult, hard, harsh words that even the disciples don't get.

Literally, the Greek text has Jesus saying, "Eat me" and you will live. These are shocking words for those followers. Generations had been spent leading up to this day Believing Holding dear God's command not to eat any blood and meat together. Blood represented life. Life needed to be drained Meat sacrificed, Burned, offered, And prepared with this in mind when making meals.

Even the Passover lamb was fully roasted. Gospel writer John here knows exactly what he's doing as he crafts Jesus' words into this good news. Within the religious faith communities as John writes this Lurks people who are teaching that the human body is bad And all anyone should care about is the unseen spiritual realm of life. The human body does evil things, gets sick and dies

So a new philosophy emerged which celebrated the spirit world. So what does John do?

Quotes Jesus saying "eat my flesh and you have life"! Sarx in Greek – the daily basic marketplace word for meat. Which Jesus contrasts with the Flesh of the world

That is of no divine eternal help. Our flesh is polluted with sinfulness. Our flesh is selfish Our flesh desires only for what we want when we want it at all costs, not matter what.

Our flesh as it is can't help us. Our flesh is only of help When Jesus' flesh and Blood is within ours. And this happens when we eat and drink Jesus. Eating flesh and drinking blood though sounds icky, strange, weird, even downright barbaric. Even to us. Jesus gives no way around this either. He's not talking about spiritual eating. Its not a metaphor, or a symbolic ideal. He is purposefully telling us a specific truth.

He makes Himself sound very food-like. Very accessible. Very intimate. that's the heart of it.

God is coming close to us in Christ

In a very personal, internal manner.

This isn't really that NEW either.

This is part of the promise by God in drawing near His people.

Throughout the old testament

Every meal Every piece of manna and quale

And Passover

And sacrifice

And miraculous gift of bread or wine

Or the great banquet Isaiah writes about coming down from heaven

All of this pointed to the day

The Saviour would come down as the Bread feeding the world.

Coming to life in Bethlehem, the House of Bread.

The Bread Jesus gives for the life of the world is His flesh

conceived in the Virgin Mary's womb,

the baby body laid in a manger;

the same flesh nailed to the cross and laid in a tomb

the same flesh raised from the dead

yet new and glorified at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus' flesh and blood coming to us are divine medicine,

the cure for our Sin,

the holy vaccine keeping us safe from evil and all eternal harm.

His flesh bled and died for you;

His life-blood poured out for you and for all,

Creating a new covenant with all who believe in Him,

A baptismal covenant,

signed with His holy, precious blood

and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus ramps His word up a bit, saying,

"Well, if that teaching is hard and offends you,

what if you see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"

If you can't handle this, how will you handle a cross and empty tomb?!

How will you handle it when He must go back to Heaven

and send you the Holy Spirit?

SOME just pick up and go away.

You know, when things start to lose their meaning,

or you don't really feel like you understand,

or its getting too aggravating, it's pretty tempting to just leave, isn't it?

But did you notice what Jesus does when the people leave?

Hmm?

Nothing.

He doesn't do anything.

Why?

Why not just try to make it easier to understand?

Why doesn't Jesus give the people what they want?

Maybe because they don't even know what they want.

Human flesh can't help this.  
Jesus is offering HIMSELF for them to eat and drink and live  
Just like they ate the bread and fish a few days ago.  
If they can't see that for the gift it is,  
If they can't trust God in giving them this Saviour in their midst,  
Then they have made their choice.  
All who come to the Lord are drawn by the Father through faith.  
That is all.  
Many find it easier walking away.  
Thinking a life of faith isn't helping.  
The number one reason people leave churches  
is because of unresolved angry words of conflict.  
Not major fighting,  
but the smaller phrases that eat away.  
Or when conflict is hidden or stifled.  
Only words of reconciliation,  
of honest apology,  
honest restitution and repentance,  
only then words of forgiveness can melt away the angry words.

Jesus gives the crowds freedom to walk away. He welcomes all but not everyone will stay.  
He won't force anyone. Seems careless, but it's truly freeing. That's the wideness of God's Love.  
But then Jesus looks at the twelve disciples remaining, and he says, "Do you wish to go away too?"  
Anyone who has ever been abandoned by their friends or their colleagues, anyone who has suddenly  
found themselves isolated and alone, knows the depths of Jesus' heart and fear in this very moment.  
Thankfully, Peter speaks a beautiful word, a line that we say or sing in our Holy Communion liturgy  
before the Gospel reading: "Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.  
Alleluia, Alleluia." To whom CAN we go? Only to Christ, For He has come to us.  
Even when Jesus' words sound crazy, He has the words of eternal life.  
Even when they stretch our reason and imagination to the snapping point,  
He has the words of eternal life. No one else does. Even when Jesus' words are hard words  
Only He has the words and flesh and blood for eternal life.  
And we want eternal life because the benefits of that eternal life are ours now.  
The peace we will have for eternity we enjoy now, Along with joy and contentedness  
And the forgiveness that heals us and our relationships today As we walk closer and closer to our  
Heavenly destination. The Word still gives life and meaning;  
Baptism still reminds you of your need for grace in your faith life;  
Holy Communion places the Flesh and Blood of Jesus into your bodies  
And you are His life in the world. Jesus safely hides His flesh and blood in Bread and Wine  
so that we can dine upon Him in faith and confidence. You are in turn invited to feed others with the  
same gifts – Offer Jesus to those who cross your path, Not just here in this community  
But when you leave this place. You're emptied of your sins and filled up with Christ.  
His words become our words. His words in our lives tame our own words.  
His life in our lives shapes our choices and work and relationships.  
We share in it together. In relationship.  
And when it's shared, we live as the flesh and blood body of Christ in the world.  
You and I have His WORD on it.  
Amen.