

# Order of Worship for at Home Use

## March 21, 2021

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9CqFrDBIZo>

As we gather online it is important to remember that we are not alone. We gather with our brothers and sisters in this church and in Christ's church wherever God has placed us. We are, after all, the body of Christ and the family of God. As His people we gather for worship and we are reminded of the promise that Christ will be with us, even to the very end of the age. We are also reminded that as God's children we are a great community and even when distanced we remain God's children in communion with God and one another.

Today as we gather, I encourage you to create a comfortable space for worship where you are reminded of God's presence in your life and that He is with you in this moment. Surround yourself with the symbols of Grace. Find a place that is peaceful so that you might hear the still quiet voice of God when it speaks to you. Maybe light a candle as a reminder of God's light in the world and in your life, have your Bible with you as it is God's revelation to us in this moment.

Pastor Jim

## We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Introit "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" arr. W. Wold  
Dr. David Dorway

Welcome Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Welcome to worship with us at Grace Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas. We are thrilled you are worshipping with us. We gather remotely online and in person to give glory to God. We know that God has promised to be with us even to the very end of the age. During our time of worship, we celebrate that God has promised to be with us regardless of if we are at home or in the church. In times of celebration, in times of sorrow and in times of confusion, God is with us.

Today is the 5th Sunday of Lent. Lent is the time of the Christian year where we take stock in our lives, preparing our hearts and lives for the grace of God won at the cross and celebrated on Easter. During lent many Christians commit acts of penitence, seeking God's forgiveness, others undertake acts of devotion renewing their commitment to God. As we worship today, I invite you to create a sacred worship space in your home that is quiet and reverent. Maybe light a candle and have your Bible with you. Open your heart and allow the presence of God to fill your space and touch your heart.

Now that all is prepared, let us worship the living God who is at our side now and always.

Call to Worship Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

One: Jesus said: I am the Bread of Life, whoever comes to me will never be hungry.

**All: Whoever believes in Jesus will never be thirsty.**

One: We are here to worship God.

**All: Jesus said it is God's will that whoever believes in Jesus shall have eternal life.**

One: God help us believe.

**All: God, help us be faithful in life and beyond.  
Let us worship God!**

Hymn #705 "It Is Well with My Soul" vs 1 & 3

Dr. Lisa Elliott

Sharing the Peace of Christ

\*\*not in video\*\*

*The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...*

*and also with you.*

*In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you."*

*Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.*

*Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!*

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Gracious God, we are hungry. We are hungry for relief from this virus and all its consequences. We are hungry for justice in an unjust world, we are hungry for the things we need and for the things we have been denied. As we bow before you in prayer, we realize that we are not worthy to be part of your kingdom. We have failed in faithfulness and in commitment. Forgive us God for when our hunger leads us astray chasing after things that are neither a blessing to others nor things that honor you. Thank you, God, that you are the bread of life and that you feed us with what we need to be your people in a world that has gone astray looking to feed its selfish desires.

Holy God this day we pray for our world. We pray for peace in our land in our world. We pray for understanding and grace for those who we think are different or those we don't understand. We pray that you will teach us compassion for those less fortunate and give us grace to forgive those who have done wrong.

God, we pray also for those in need this day. For those who are isolated and alone we pray for companionship and belonging. For those who are grieving we pray for comfort. For those who are sick or injured we pray for divine healing. We pray blessing on those who are called to serve. For teachers, caregivers, medical professionals, police and all who protect us. God bless these people with your grace, goodness, and strength.

We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ saying

*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 debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.*

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

### **We Listen to God's Word**

Hymn/Praise	Jesus Loves Me	**not in video**
	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc</a>	
Children's Message		Pastor Dana Pope
Special Music	"The Lord Is My Light"	P. Drennan Chancel Choir
Reading of the Word	John 6:22-40	Pastor Dana Pope
Message	"I AM...the Bread of Life"	

Today we turn to the last I AM statement of our sermon series, I AM the bread of life. This is actually the first of the 7 I AM statements in the gospel of John. Jesus made these statements to reveal Who He is. They are grounded in the Old Testament statement of YHWH - I AM Who I AM – in Exodus. In the gospel of John, Jesus says, I AM: the bread of life, the light of the world, the door of the sheep, the resurrection and the life, the good shepherd, the way, the truth and the life, and the true vine.

As we turn to our scripture reading today, I want to remind you of what has come before. Jesus, on the shore of the sea of Galilee has been teaching a large crowd, which has continued to follow Him – seeking His teaching and miracles. They had seen that He was healing the sick, and they sought Him out to hear what He had to say. He went up onto the mountain, and pretty soon the crowds had followed Him there. He realized that they were hungry after the travel and teaching, so He asked the disciples to find food for them.

A boy had come, with his packed lunch of 5 loaves and 2 fish, and as we remember, Jesus had everyone sit. Jesus gave thanks for the meal, and they ate. And ate. And there were leftovers. Scholars think that along with the 5000 people mentioned in the scripture, there could have been double or even triple that number. All were fed that day. The people were so amazed and moved that they were about to make Jesus their king... when Jesus left by himself.

Our scripture reading for today takes place after Jesus and the disciples went across the sea. The disciples in the boat and Jesus, meeting them, walking on the rough waters...

John Chapter 6, starting at verse 22

<sup>22</sup> The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

<sup>28</sup> Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

<sup>30</sup> So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? <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> Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given 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 the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

<sup>34</sup> “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Here ends the reading of God’s Word for us today, thanks be to God.

Please pray with me...

As we turn to our scripture reading for today, we begin the morning by thinking about bread.

For some bread is simply a slice of bread to make a sandwich, taken from a plastic bag of sliced white enriched bread - purchased at the grocery store, for others what comes to mind is a warm loaf of sourdough bread taken from the oven and put on the counter to cool. Brought to your table at a restaurant...

Bread is staple food for most all humanity, all around the world, and has been for generations upon generations. Various textures and colors, shapes and sizes... from tortillas to cornbread, naan or flatbread, a loaf of French bread or honey wheat – right out of the oven - with a little butter, or pumpkin bread or ... (are we hungry yet?)

There is something so comforting, enticing, and satisfying about a good piece of warm bread. In our world where we eat bread often, where hunger is altogether too common, and in a society where we are driven - far too often - by our appetites and desires...for food, and other things... we turn to our I AM statement and consider what Jesus meant when He said I AM the bread of life.

In the first part of chapter six which we read today, we see the people that followed Jesus, listened to Him teach, were so impressed with the miracle of multiplication of bread and fish... that they wanted to crown Him king. Right there, on the spot. He had filled their hungry stomachs, nourished them with bread and fish, and now...they wanted more of that food Jesus offered. What more could they want they wondered?

What more could we want? As good and lovely as bread is... it only satisfies for a while...and often - we eat it – even when our bodies need something else. Even if it WAS Jesus himself that gave it... a piece of bread will have to be followed up by another, or instead...some vegetables, or protein. In a few hours - hunger returns. The bread we eat is temporary nourishment that satisfies only for a while.

While the people think they are asking for Jesus to fill them, they really don't know what they need or even want...and maybe we don't either. We are far too often much more concerned with immediate needs and desires instead of considering and eternal reality and possibilities.

One of my favorite questions for group discussion is one I have borrowed from Barbara Brown Taylor... “What is saving your life right now?” I love this question because there is no right or wrong answer, and at times the answer will be light-hearted as people discuss the books they are reading and at other times it will be a deep - soul - answer. I wonder: if you were to consider “what is saving your life right now?” is your first thought to immediate needs fulfilled, or eternal possibilities?

When we answer the question - many times the answer is tangible – right in front of us. I have heard many things that save lives...especially in the past year... diet coke, the current novel, Netflix, or puzzles... many things fill us and save our lives in small ways...lift our spirits and help us make it through. And far too often we think that’s enough. Even as beloved children of God, far too often our eyes do not see eternal possibilities and hunger.

As I researched this week, I ran across an article by a nutritionist, Anita Bowes... this nutritionist said that many of us don’t actually know when we are hungry. And she wrote that there are actually 7 kinds of hunger... Eye hunger – when we want to eat because something looks good; Nose hunger – when we are not hungry but we walk by a bakery and smell the fresh bread (for example) and stop for some; Mouth hunger – when we eat without being hungry because we long for a texture or taste; Stomach hunger – when we feel hungry – although when we eat at the same time every day sometimes our bodies trick us; Cellular hunger – when our bodies need nutrients that we aren’t getting... it might be that pregnant women are often more in tune with this type of hunger as cravings indicate something that is needed; Mind hunger – when we eat according to popular diets; and Heart hunger – emotionally driven eating which tries to fill or resolve feelings which are unpleasant.

If we don’t know we are physically hungry, we surely have difficulty discerning when we are spiritually hungry.

According to Psalm 42 *Spiritual hunger* is described like this: *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.* Spiritual hunger is a longing for God’s presence and God’s grace to touch and fill our souls, a hunger for God’s mercy and miracles to fill our lives, a hunger for the power of Holy Spirit to fill us. A hunger for more/better a different way of living and being. A hunger for more than what we see – a deeper way to live and connect with ourselves, our God and others.



Sometimes people will say that what is saving their lives right now is: connection with people, serving those in need, reaching out and having real conversations with family and friends... or they will say... worship, the music of the church, prayer...

Much too often we mindlessly go through life, feeding our hunger with that which does not satisfy... eating when we aren't hungry or taking in nutrients our bodies can't process and don't need.

So, Jesus says, to those that follow Him wanting bread, come to me. I AM the bread of life...you ate, and were made full – so you want more – and it's not the food you want... I have more / better to offer. I can sustain you, truly fill you, nourish you for the journey of life. I can give you real abundant life.

Friends, there is so often a hunger within us. One that we ignore...because it's a little uncomfortable or difficult to understand – a restlessness within. Or maybe we try to satisfy that hunger with food or drink, or friends, or success and money, or attention, or reputation, or comments and likes on fb. But it is clear these things do not provide real abundant life, they will not satisfy us long term, and they only provide a temporary fix and a life that is barely living.

The psalmist invites us: taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps 34:9). When we do, we find that life is more than just living and breathing. True life - life in Christ - engages the soul and the life of the spirit. We find this to be true when we have a mountaintop experience with God – maybe a retreat or special worship service or spiritual event... but Jesus invites us to a life full of His grace, mercy and presence.

The life we are offered in Jesus' name is a life which is rich and has a depth and meaning which we will never find if we only pursue the things this world tells us will satisfy us.

In Psalm 63 – a psalm of David – we hear these words: “O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water...I will praise You and ...my soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods...”

Friends, I invite us to take some time to consider our hunger today. Notice what we are trying to satisfy that hunger with. Do we feel full? Are we fulfilled and living life abundantly in Christ?

Consider asking – what is saving my life today?

The answer might reveal if we are focused more on eternal possibilities or immediate needs... if the bread which we eat is of our own baking or the bread of heaven.

## **We Respond to the Voice of God**

Presentation Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

In church, at worship we typically pass two different plates. One is the communion plate and the other is the offering plate. These plates have much in common. The communion plate shares God's grace in the sacrament of communion. Symbolically and mysteriously our souls are fed and nourished by God's grace in the act of communion. The offering plate is passed to give followers of Jesus an opportunity to respond to God's grace, generously giving of themselves by sharing resources with God's people, or by committing acts of mission and ministry. During COVID we are not passing an offering plate, however we are asking that you give as you feel led by the Spirit of God and that you also prayerfully consider how you might respond to God's grace. He is the bread of life and He has promised to supply your needs, in response, how might you commit yourself to being part of God's grace in our world?

Let us return God's tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link:

<https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“At Calvary” D. Towner

Praise Team  
Chancel Choir

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Holy God we thank you for all the blessings you have poured out in our lives. Thank you for our loved ones and our relationships. Thank you for our resource and the time you have given each of us. Thank you for your grace and the gifts of second chances. Out of gratitude we now commit these gifts and ask that you bless them and use them for the work of our kingdom.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

## We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn      “Beautiful Day”      R. Muchow  
Dr. Lisa Elliott

Benediction      Pastor Dana Pope

May the LORD bless you, and keep you.  
May the LORD make His face shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you, and give you peace.  
Amen.

Postlude      “Ah, Holy Jesus” March      W. Wold  
Dr. David Dorway, organist

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

### In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens )

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Buswell,  
Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan,  
Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie & Wayne Everhart, Joice Franklin,  
Mary Gafford, Charlene Harper, Pam Kodey, Christian and Lara Kolberg,  
Dorell Koon, Richard Lyle, Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Don Moore,  
Maggie O’Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Mary Phillips,  
Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon, Marty & Barbara Swartout,  
Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

### In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020  
Randy Innis 3/18/2020  
Clark Trapp 3/18/2020  
Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020  
Ted Phillips 4/1/2020  
Violet Cross 4/4/2020  
Bill Franklin 5/4/2020  
Greg Holt 5/7/2020  
Carol Mohr 5/25/2020  
Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020  
Louis Romero 8/8/2020  
Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020

Gary Oiler 8/23/2020  
Donna Gibson 9/14/2020  
Audrey Mitchell 12/1/2020  
Alice Black 12/23/2020  
Phyllis McGuire 12/29/2020  
Carol Moore 12/30/2020  
Andrew Davis 1/1/2021  
Kay Stinson 1/3/2021  
Robert "Bob" Lockhart 1/16/2021  
Laverne Willman 1/11/2021  
Jennifer Moore 2/12/2021  
Joe Fontana 2/22/2021  
Greta Hougnon 3/17/2021