



## Call to Worship

*Written by Rev. Bonnie Tarwater and inspired by Psalm 130 and John 6:35*

Out of the depths I cry to you, O God. Hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!  
There is forgiveness with you and I wait for you, O God.  
My soul waits for You. In your words I hope.  
My soul waits for you, God, more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning:  
I hunger for the bread of Jesus, the bread of life, and I thirst for you, O God.

**Hymn:** StF 252 *Anonymous, Urdu. Trans. Carl Dermott Monahan*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-I-OV28\\_Fs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-I-OV28_Fs)

Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Bread,  
the Bread of Life for the world am I.  
The Bread of Life for the world am I,  
The Bread of Life for the world am I.'  
Jesus the Lord said: I am the Bread,  
the Bread of Life for the world am I.'

The true and living Way am I.'  
Jesus the Lord said: I am the Way,  
the true and living Way am I.'

Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Vine,  
the true and fruitful Vine am I.  
The true and fruitful Vine am I,  
The true and fruitful Vine am I.'  
Jesus the Lord said: I am the Vine,  
the true and fruitful Vine am I.'

Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Light,  
the one true Light of the world am I.  
The one true Light of the world am I,  
The one true Light of the world am I.'  
Jesus the Lord said: I am the Light,  
the one true Light of the world am I.'

Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Way,  
the true and living Way am I.  
The true and living Way am I,

Jesus the Lord said: 'I am the Life,  
the resurrection and the Life am I.  
The resurrection and the Life am I,  
The resurrection and the Life am I.'  
Jesus the Lord said: I am the Life,  
the resurrection and the Life am I.'

## Opening Prayer

We praise you, O God, for the meaning that you give to our lives in and through Jesus. He is the sign of your deep and everlasting love for the world and we rejoice in his promise to sustain us with his life. We praise you for filling our emptiness with his goodness. May our worship and praise express our thanks, O God, for your gift to us of the true bread from heaven—Jesus Christ, your Son, our living Lord. *(Moirá Laidlaw, Liturgies Online)*

*We come now to make our confession...* We are sorry for those times when we have let you down. Forgive us for not believing your words. Forgive us for elevating earthly appetites above devotion to you. Forgive us for not coming to you to receive your nourishment. Help us Lord, to empty ourselves of those things that hinder us from knowing the fullness of your love and fill us with those things that make us all that you want us to be. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**Scripture** John 6:35,41-58

**Reflection** *Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. (John 6:53)*

This is our fourth week in the sixth chapter of John as we ponder the image of bread and Jesus telling us that he is the bread of life. John's repetitiveness is an indication of what is important and a sign of the difficulty that is being communicated. When he talks about bread, he is not talking about flour, water and yeast, but about something that has 'come down from heaven' (v51). Jesus is the incarnation of God.

John told us in chapter one that the Word had become flesh and moved in with us. Jesus was God in the flesh who came to meet us. Jesus is not only a gifted teacher, a compassionate healer, a worker of miraculous signs and wonders, he is also our bread. He is bread come down from heaven. He is 'flesh' that is to be eaten, 'blood' to be drunk. We are thus encouraged not simply to follow Jesus, which is difficult enough in itself, nor simply to be with Jesus, but we are to consume him. It is strange to be told that if we are to think about the Word made flesh, we must think through ingestion, consumption, and intimate, deep engagement. Paul made the claim of "no longer I ... but ... Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). There is no knowing who Christ is without visceral, total engagement. We will not be able to comprehend him by sitting back, comfortable in the pew, and coolly considering him as if he were an abstract, disembodied idea. Incarnation means that we must get up, come forward, hold out empty hands, chew bread and gulp wine. The verbs in the Greek here move from polite ones about eating and drinking to more visceral verbs of chewing and gulping.

The Christian faith would be easier if it were a matter of mere belief or intellectual assent! But today's gospel reminds us that Jesus intends to have all of us, body and soul. His truth wants to burrow deep within us, to consume us as we consume him, to flow through our veins, to be digested, to nourish every nook and cranny of our being. Jesus wants to have all of us, and he wants us to have all of him.

*Consider:*

- *Why do you think individuals are not satisfied with Christ and long for another sign?*
- *What are ways that you have tasted Christ and experienced him as the bread of life?*

## **Prayers**

O Bread of heaven, come and fill us. We hunger and thirst for you and long to be nurtured in your love and forgiveness. Only your bread can fully satisfy and nourish us. Feed us with that soul-food which nurtures enough love within us to outstrip the fears and enmity that ties the world up in knots. Feed us with that spiritual bread which strengthens our hands for serving those broken and lost people whom this world deems a waste of space. Feed us, so that we may be fulfilled with some of that joy which the universe cannot contain. *We lift up now the concerns for others that we have on our hearts.* ... Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray: *Our Father ...*

**Hymn: StF 153** v. 1 *Mary Artemesia Lathbury (1841-1913)*, vv. 2&3 *Alexander Groves (1842-1909)*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN9x8\\_F32sU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN9x8_F32sU)

Break thou the bread of life,  
O Lord, to me,  
as thou didst break the loaves  
beside the sea.  
Beyond the sacred page  
I seek thee, Lord;  
my spirit longs for thee,  
O Living Word!

Thou art the Bread of Life,  
O Lord, to me,  
thy holy word the truth  
that saveth me;

give me to eat and live  
with thee above;  
teach me to love thy truth,  
for thou art love.

O send thy Spirit, Lord,  
now unto me,  
that he may touch my eyes,  
and make me see;  
show me the truth concealed  
within thy word,  
and in thy book revealed  
I see the Lord.

## **Blessing**

Go from here blessed and nourished by the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
And may God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with us all, now and always. Amen.