

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus 85



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Wilton, WI
 14th Sunday after Pentecost
 August 25, 2024
People to
Journey with Christ's Family
in Spreading God's Love and Mercy

C

1 I have de - cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus; I have de -
 2 Though none go with me, still I will fol - low; though none go
 3 The world be - hind me, the cross be - fore me; the world be -

F C

cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus; I have de - cid - ed to fol - low
 with me, still I will fol - low; though none go with me, still I will
 hind me, the cross be - fore me, the world be - hind me, the cross be -

G7 C

Je - sus;
 fol - low; no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 fore me;

In today's gospel many people take offense at Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood; even many of Jesus' disciples peel off. This is the backdrop in John's gospel for Peter's confession of faith. "To whom can we go?" asks Peter, in words we sometimes sing just before the gospel is read. "You have the words of eternal life." In order to take such a stand, as Peter and Joshua did, Paul tells us to arm ourselves with the word of God. We pray in the Spirit that we might be bold ambassadors of the gospel.

****(Indicates that the people should stand as they are able.)***
Announcements

Gathering
The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
 the God of manna,
 the God of miracles,
 the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
 let us confess our sin.

God, our provider,
help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

CALENDAR

Sun., Sept. 1	Worship	9:00 AM
	Kendall Labor Day Parade	
Wed., Sept. 4	Confirmation	TBD

THOSE SERVING TODAY

Ministers: All God's People; Synod Authorized Minister: Karen Sparling;
Organist: Nalani Bever; Reader: Miranda Arndt; Altar: Barb Bever and
Karla Richie

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please have any items you wish to include in the Sept./Oct. newsletter to the church office no later than Wednesday, August 28.

MISSION TRIP, 2025

Is your child in high school for the 24/25 school year and might be interested in a mission trip? Pastor Dawn at Peace Lutheran is starting to put numbers together. Please let Karen or Nalani know if you feel your son/daughter might have an interest.

JANITOR POSITION

With Ayawyn leaving for college, we are in need of a janitor. If you are interested in the position, please contact Nalani or Karen.

CHOIR

We are wondering if there is any interest in starting a choir this fall. Please let Nalani know if you'd be willing to participate.

FLEECE BLANKETS

Our Savior's Lutheran Church in La Crosse is asking for donations of fleece blankets for the homeless. Exclude prints, just single color blankets work the best. Bring your donated blankets and we'll get them to La Crosse. Thank you.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading

In the Near East, covenant means "agreement" or "alliance." It describes relationships and is the primary word used to characterize the relationship between God and Israel. By delivering Israel, God has already begun the relationship. Joshua calls upon the people to respond.

A reading from Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ^{2a}And Joshua said to all the people, ¹⁴"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

¹⁶Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 34:15-22

- ¹⁵The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous,
and God's ears are open to their cry.
- ¹⁶**The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to erase the remembrance of them from the earth.**
- ¹⁷The righteous cry, and the LORD hears them
and delivers them from all their troubles.
- ¹⁸**The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves those whose spirits are crushed.**
- ¹⁹Many are the troubles of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers them from every one.
- ²⁰**God will keep safe all their bones;
not one of them shall be broken.**
- ²¹Evil will bring death to the wicked
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.
- ²²**O LORD, you redeem the life of your servants,
and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.**

Second Reading

Like a general giving a rousing speech to troops before battle, this letter closes by calling on Christians to be equipped for spiritual warfare against evil. The full armor of God includes truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the gift of salvation, and the word of God inspired by the Spirit.

A reading from Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For 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. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Jesus, Bread of life,
**we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray.
Amen.**

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.
Amen.

*Hymn

"Blessed Assurance"

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Dismissal

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Gloria Meltesen, Darlene, Babbitt, Laurie Switz Johnson, Heidi Stenerson, Dan Paulson, Richie Vlasak, Kristy Gwin Solovey, Bud Speicher, Hudson Steckl, Kathy Von Ruden, Lyle Schindler, Jared Gruen, Ken Von Ruden

IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Dylan Dougherty, Danelle Dougherty, Allen Roscovious, Robert Cale, Matthew Dutton,

*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Words of Institution

*LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.

Come!

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ's table.

"Lamb of God"

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Distribution

everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸Pray 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. ¹⁹Pray 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, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation**

"Alleluia"

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GOSPEL READING

The "hard saying" that offends Jesus' disciples is his claim that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. The followers who return to their old lives know something about how odd this sounds. Simon Peter, on the other hand, knows something about the scarcity of living, gracious words. He asks the most important question: "To whom shall we go?"

The Holy Gospel according to John 6:56-59

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said,] ⁵⁶"Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This 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 forever." ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" ⁶¹But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you?" ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But 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. ⁶⁵And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father."

⁶⁶Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Karen Sparling
Synod Authorized Minister

Hymn

"Will You Come and Follow Me"

ELW#798

***Apostle's Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** (Merciful God, receive our prayer.)

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

***Offertory Hymn**

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"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Please join together in the Offertory Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,

**you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.**

**Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.**

**Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.**

Amen.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

***Great Thanksgiving**

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***Holy, Holy, Holy**

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