

The word for this week is wisdom. Sometimes we view wisdom as akin to intelligence, as an intellectual capacity, but the readings this week move us into a whole different experience of wisdom as something that is gained through intimate union with God in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and that is lived in simple but practical ways in our daily lives.

May our liturgy lead us into deeper union with Christ and with the wisdom Jesus offers.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

*For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines*

### **1 Kings 2 : 10-12, 3 : 3-14**

Our weekly extracts from the history of Israel's kings now tell of Solomon succeeding his father David to the throne. Solomon acquired a great reputation for showing God's wisdom in everything he did.

### *or* **Proverbs 9 : 1-6**

To this writer, wisdom was one of God's personal attributes. Here, just as Jesus as to do, God invites all to come in and eat bread and wine at the Lord's table.

### **Psalm 111**

A Psalm in praise of God's works which are glorious, righteous, just, merciful, compassionate and trustworthy. God has redeemed God's people and established an everlasting covenant with them, and wisdom is found in the fear of God and in keeping God's laws.

### *or* **Psalm 34: 1-8**

Those who honour God lack nothing, and God is honoured by those who do not speak evil or lies, who do good and seek peace.

### **Ephesians 5 : 15-20**

This letter has much to say about the details of Christian behaviour, and now encourages us to be sensible and moderate people, constant in worship and always thankful for all things.

### **John 6 : 51-58**

For several Sundays we have been following John's extended section of Jesus's teaching about spiritual food. To those who first heard Jesus talk about his body and blood, the words made little sense. But John and the church cherish the words as the meaning of every Communion.

## **TEXT OF READINGS**

[http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB\\_RCL/Pentecost/BProp15\\_RCL.html](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp15_RCL.html)

## **COLLECTS OF THE DAY**

### **Collect One**

O God,  
who declarest thy almighty power  
most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity;  
Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace,  
that we, running the way of thy commandments,  
may obtain thy gracious promises,

and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Collect Two

O God,  
you declare your almighty power  
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:  
Mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,  
that we, running the way of your commandments,  
may receive your gracious promises,  
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Jesus, Son of God incarnate, your earthly and heavenly origins were deemed absurd by those who failed to see God's eternal design. As those who are often characterised by such lack of vision, we pray, "Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord," and respond, "Not by sight alone."

The churches in our community reflect a variety of Christian experience, tradition and understanding. Give us grace, we pray, not to demean, belittle, or detract from any who follow Christ. Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord. **Not by sight alone.**

The new missions of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada struggle to grow and need many skills in management, instruction, and outreach, we pray with them. Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord. **Not by sight alone.**

With those who now pledge their lives to one another in holy matrimony and desire to establish Christian homes, we pray. Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord. **Not by sight alone.**

As the Selet Vestry and other groups prepare to serve our congregation in a new programme year, we are moved to pray with them. Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord. **Not by sight alone.**

We pray for the newly-retired and seniors among us, that they will seek the promise and joy of advancing years. Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord. **Not by sight alone.**

Forgive us, Lord, when we have failed to submit to the directives of your Spirit. Renew in us a right mind and willing heart. Grant us to walk by faith, O Lord. **Not by sight alone.**

We bless you with our lips and lives, O God.

Amen.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Let us mix the wine and set the table with prayer for those in desperate need.

For this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all nations and their leaders, and for mercy, justice, and peace in the world.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For students and teachers, and all those returning to their studies.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For travellers and those on vacation, and for safety from violent storms.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick and the suffering, prisoners and their families, the hungry and the oppressed, and all in danger and need.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our city and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all we love.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lifting our voices with all creation, with ----- and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

*Presider*

God of eternal life, who built a house of faithful people, have mercy on all who gather in your name and grant our prayers for all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **POST COMMUNION**

Lord of all mercy,  
we your faithful people have celebrated  
the memorial of that single sacrifice  
which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace.  
By our communion  
keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel  
and preserve us from all sin;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## PRAYERS

Holy Wisdom,  
you granted Solomon's request  
for an understanding mind  
and the knowledge to discern good from evil.  
Fill us with such understanding and knowledge  
that we may act as instruments  
of your loving desire for creation,  
working with you to transform  
our conceit into concern for others,  
our fear into love,  
our violence into peace,  
and our brokenness into wholeness. Amen.

Friends in Christ,  
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers  
as dear to us as our own needs.  
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,  
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions  
on behalf of the church and the world.  
Hear our prayers, God of power,  
and through the ministry of your Son  
free us from the grip of the tomb,  
that we may desire you as the fullness of life  
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,  
and guided them in the way of your love,  
so listen now to those who call upon you.  
Move us to praise your gracious will,  
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death  
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,  
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens  
and healed our spirits.  
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,  
those seeking healing,  
those in need within the church and the world.  
Hear our prayers  
that we may love you with our whole being  
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours. Amen.

Creator God,  
you call us to love and serve you  
with body, mind, and spirit  
through loving your creation  
and our sisters and brothers.  
Open our hearts in compassion  
and receive these petitions

on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.  
Holy One,  
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards  
of the fragile bounty of this earth  
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,  
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,  
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.  
We offer these prayers of love  
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbours,  
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.  
Loving God,  
open our ears to hear your word  
and draw us closer to you,  
that the whole world may be one with you  
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,  
you who hear the cries of those in need,  
receive these petitions of your people  
that all who are troubled  
may know peace, comfort, and courage.  
Life-giving God,  
heal our lives,  
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds  
and offer you thanks from generation to generation  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,  
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,  
hear our prayers  
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,  
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings  
with your unending compassion.  
Redeeming Sustainer,  
visit your people  
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,  
that we may hurry to make you welcome  
not only in our concern for others,  
but by serving them  
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

Living God,  
you are the giver of wisdom and true discernment,  
guiding those who seek your ways to choose the good.  
Mercifully grant that your people,  
feasting on the true bread of heaven,  
may have eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy Wisdom, God of abundant life,  
you call us to the banquet of your love.

We find you in the gifts you give;  
we know you in the ones with whom we share this holy food,  
and in the bread of this table, your son, Jesus Christ.  
Grant that we may be bread for others,  
as he is bread for us. Amen.

## LECTIONARY NOTES 1

### REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The key word this week is wisdom. Solomon is praised by God for seeking wisdom above all things, and the reading from Proverbs invites all who lack understanding to eat and drink in Wisdom's house in order to grow wise. In the Psalms, God's work on behalf of God's people is praised, and wisdom is offered to those who fear the Lord, and life to those who follow God's commands. In Paul's letter, the Ephesians are encouraged to live wisely by being filled with God's Spirit as they sing to one another and to God in songs of praise and as they give thanks in all things. Finally, although Jesus doesn't speak of wisdom specifically in the passage from John, the Proverbs passage creates a link through the metaphor of eating and drinking. Those who seek life find it, Jesus says, by eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood. This shocking image speaks of absolute union with God, taking the very essence of Christ into our beings, and it results in life, the same life that comes from living wisely. Wisdom is found, then, through union with Christ and through living in the power of Christ's Spirit that fills us as we "ingest" the Christ-nature. The strong resonances with the sacrament that come through the readings should also not be missed this week, since it is at Christ's Table that we are invited into this mystical union with God.

### CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** It can feel like wisdom is in short supply in our world today, but we need creative, surprising and courageous wisdom if we are to navigate the difficult times in which we find ourselves. The challenge is that we so often choose expediency and self-interest over wisdom. Corporate leaders are measured every quarter not because this is the way to ensure the best solutions for sustainability and corporate social responsibility, but because share-holders want to be sure that their investments are growing. Political parties oppose each other on principle not because they really believe in their positions and ideals (as evidenced by how easily they change position when it becomes expedient to do so) but for political gain and one-upmanship. Even religious communities fall prey to holding on to self-interested beliefs and practices for their own survival's sake, rather than embracing what is best for the whole planet and its peoples. What we require is courageous and bold people who are willing to commit to the wisdom of justice, peace, compassion, sustainability and sharing through the long term; who are strong enough to stay the course and do the work necessary to bring about the needed changes in our systems and structures. And if we want leaders like this, then every one of us must lay aside our own personal agendas, and begin voting for and supporting those who lead like this. Since our leaders are accountable to their constituents, we get the leaders we choose. When we send strong signals that we will not stand for short-term gains over long-term wisdom, we won't support partisan point-scoring over the common good, and we won't be part of ideologies that favour some over all, our stand for wisdom will inevitably shift our leaders and our world into wiser ways of being.

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** If the Lectionary is to be believed this week, wisdom is found by uniting ourselves with Christ, by "eating his flesh and drinking his blood", by taking his presence and purpose into ourselves, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. This requires

two movements in our daily living. Firstly, we need to recapture the discipline of daily spiritual practice – prayer, Scripture reading and Christlike action (For this purpose I have developed a resource to help individuals and churches to develop a meaningful and transforming daily practice linked with the Revised Common Lectionary. For more information go to <http://sacredise.com/daily>). Secondly, we need to allow our union with Christ to overflow into lives of gracious, generous, gentle and humble living. It is when we commit to union with God and to living from God's wisdom, that we are able to bring the life of Christ into our homes, our churches, our neighbourhoods and our communities. This means rejecting many of the values of our society – instant gratification and consumerism, accumulation and rampant individualism, protectionism and the avoidance of diversity. It also means learning to live in the same self-giving way that Jesus did, for when we all learn to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others, we discover the wisdom and life that we all are able to enjoy together. The quest for wisdom, then, is not just about how we think, but about how we live, and it is only in union with God and in the strength of God's Spirit that we can hope to embrace this life.

## **LECTIONARY NOTES    2**

### ***1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14***

- Given the chance to ask God for anything (with the understanding that God will give what is asked), Solomon asks for the ability to discern between good and evil. Would that all leaders would ask for that gift! What would you ask for, really, if you could ask God for one gift?
- "it pleased the Lord" - what was the last thing you did that you think specifically "pleased God"?
- "walk in my ways . . . as your father David walked" - whose ways do you walk in? Whose life is an example for you as David's was for Solomon?

### ***Psalm 111:***

- The psalmist is praising God for faithfulness, for being a provider and covenant-keeper, for following through and being with the people. This psalm is all about praising and thanking God for all God has done.
- "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Do you fear God? We're instructed over and over again in the scriptures not to be afraid. What does it mean, then, to fear God or to be God-fearing? I interpret it to mean we're to have an awe of God that is an awe we give *only* to God. Should/do we fear God anymore, or have we gotten too cozy? It's great to feel close to God, but have we lost our reverence in the process, the believe that God is actually above and beyond us in many respects? Where is a good line between fear/love/respect?

### ***Ephesians 5:15-20:***

- We're advised to live wisely - a nice tie in on a wisdom theme with our text from 1 Kings.
- "making the most of time, because the days are evil." When we lament the current state of affairs, it is sometimes comforting in a way to know that people always felt

they were living in "the worst of times." How, though, do we make the most of our time? Rest, relaxation, Sabbath - important things - but what is the difference between Sabbath and wasting time? We walk a fine line sometimes. Time is short - we should be careful how we choose to use it.

- "sing psalms and hymns" - I am a music lover. Isn't it amazing that we've always used music as part of worship? Something about music and art and theatre that goes so well with worship and theology and God.

### John 6:51-58:

- This text continues with week four of a month-long series of texts from John 6 that all talk about Jesus and bread and feeding and bread of life and living water, etc., etc. The imagery is rich and meaningful and can communicate a great deal. On the flip side, I remember preaching on these texts three years ago when I was just starting at my first appointment, and wondering if I would ever get to talk about something other than bread!
- "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Early Christians were sometimes accused of promoting cannibalism for their communion theology. Indeed, to an outsider, it would be hard to explain what our theology and symbolism meant. How would you do it?
- "you have no life in you" - we must be part of the body to have life. Compare this with the body imagery Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 12 to talk about spiritual gifts.
- When Jesus talks about living forever, what do you think he means, exactly? Life in heaven? A right here-right now eternal life?

By Beth Quick

### SERMON OUTLINE

#### John 6:51-58 I am the living bread

These had been exciting times for the Jews – Jesus had fed the 5000 & walked on the water... Now Jesus makes a further amazing claim:- *51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven* – no ordinary human being! The Jews knew of old how God had provided *bread from heaven* for 40yrs in the wilderness... Now God has provided something more special...

#### The Bread of Life

1) Sustains... The body needs food – or starves & dies – cf the soul as it feeds on *the spiritual food of the body & blood of X (HC)*... So Jesus:- *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you* >> spiritual death....

2) Satisfies.... *Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; v51 & the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.* - *55 for my flesh is true food & my blood is true drink* – spiritual satisfaction....

3) Saves... for time & eternity - *58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, & they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.*

a) wondrous provision: *51 I am the living bread...*

b) wonderful promise – *those who eat my flesh v54 & drink my blood have eternal life, & I will raise them up on the last day; 56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in*

## The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity YEAR B August,16 2012

*me, & I in them. May we truly abide in Him by faith & feed on Him who is the Bread of Life....*

*By Norman Porteous*

### ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"The Woman Less Listened To," the Rev. Dr. David von Schlichten, *Day 1*  
[http://day1.org/1404-the\\_woman\\_less\\_listened\\_to](http://day1.org/1404-the_woman_less_listened_to)

"You Are Warmly Invited..." Dianne Bergant, CSA, *America*  
[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=3096](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=3096)

"You Are What You Eat," John R. Donahue, SJ, *America*:  
[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=2115](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2115)

### CHILDREN

"Sermon of the Week," / "Mensajes para ninos," Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.  
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity](#), Ordinary 20, at word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding.  
<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.htm>

"The Best of Everything," Children's Time, in Sermons and Liturgies. Richard J. Fairchild. (Scroll down in liturgies to find Children's Time.)  
<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-or20smsn.php>

### HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Breathe On Me, Breath Of God  
Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire  
Praise To The Lord, The Almighty, The King Of Creation  
Lead Us, Heavenly Father Lead Us  
Never Let My Hunger Die  
Here I Am, Jesus  
Son Of God  
Breathe  
In Love For Me  
All Who Are Thirsty