

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; August 18, 2024
13th Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Fugleberg

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson/Fugleberg

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 34

PASTOR: Whoever of you loves life

ALL: And desires to see many good days,

PASTOR: Keep your tongue from evil

ALL: And your lips from speaking lies.

PASTOR: Turn from evil and do good;

ALL: Seek peace and pursue it.

HYMN #561 “When Peace Like a River”

CONFESSION OF SIN: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ’s sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Glenn Gustafson

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Joshua 24:14-18 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then CHOOSE for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served 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." 16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! 17 It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our*

entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18 And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

EPISTLE LESSON: *Ephesians 5:6-13 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.*

READER: Here ends the reading of God’s Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by CAROL

SERMON: “CHOOSING A LEADER” John 6:51-69

This is the year that we the people of the United States choose a new leader for the next four years. The people who followed Jesus were faced with a choice: “Would they continue to follow Him, or stop following Him and go back home?” Jesus knew that many were following Him in order to get free bread to eat. But that was not what He wanted to offer them. He wanted to offer himself to them so they could be part of the redeemed family of God.

Jesus gave them a strong word that helped them to make up their mind. People are making choices every day, whether or not they want to follow Jesus. Some 50 percent of Americans or more have given up on following the Lord. Joshua put it straight to the children of Israel when they were about to enter the promised land: “Choose this day whom you will serve...the Gods of Egypt or the Creator of the world...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. How do we decide what leader we want to follow. Jesus shows us what to look for... “CHOOSING A LEADER.”

I. CHOOSE A LEADER WHO SACRIFICES TO LEAD

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

II. CHOOSE A LEADER WHO TELLS THE WHOLE TRUTH

John 6:52-65 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and

drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." 59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" 61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

III. CHOOSE A LEADER YOUR HEART TRUSTS

John 6:66-69 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

HYMN #445 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

LORD’S PRAYER: *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 that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG: Picked by Carol

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson