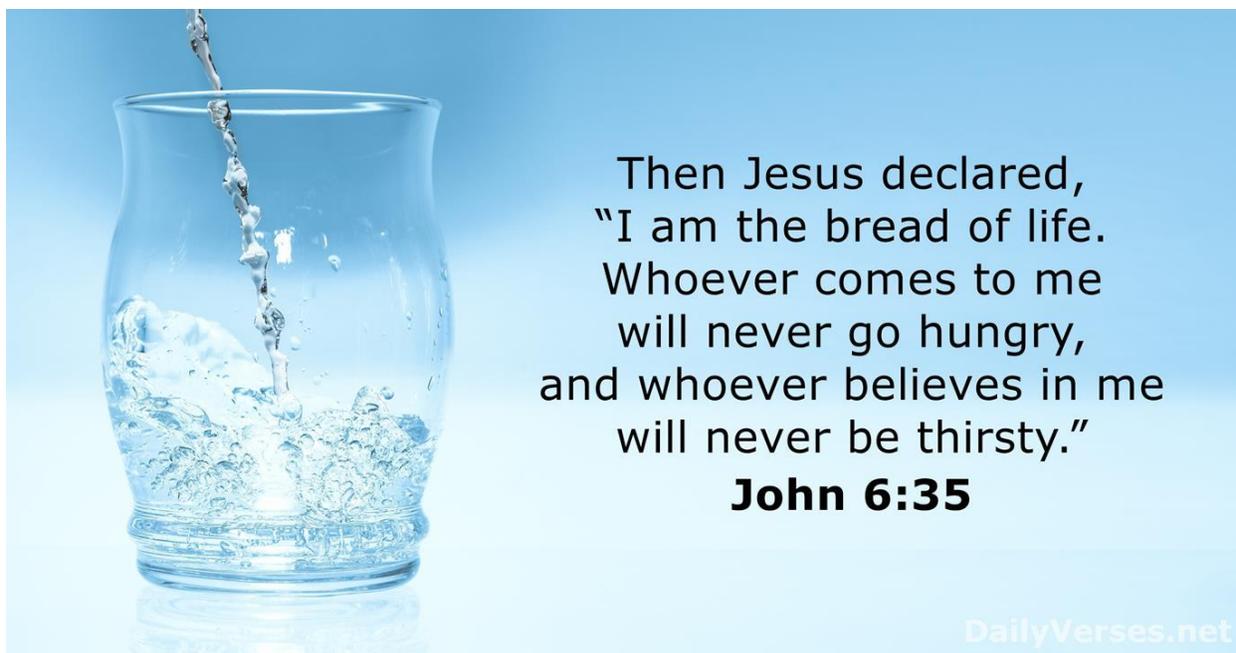


**John 6:35-51**

<sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

<sup>41</sup>Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” <sup>42</sup>They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” <sup>43</sup>Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves. <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. <sup>46</sup>Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup>Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”



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.”

**John 6:35**

## Sermon – August 8, 2021 – St James and St Andrews

Jesus, the bread of life. That is our focus today.

But first this. I painted our metal front door this week, a sky blue colour. I think it goes nicely with the new siding on our house – it's a yellowy colour called 'maize'. Here is the front door and you can also see the siding.



Tim reminded me that blue and yellow are the colours of the Ukrainian flag.



My Ukrainian grandmother told me long ago that the ‘blue represents the sky and the yellow the steppes where the wheat grows.’ At the time my grandmother told me about the Ukrainian flag, it was actually banned, replaced by the red hammer and sickle of the USSR. But to my grandmother..., the true flag was the blue and yellow of sky and steppes. You could say the steppes are the Ukrainian prairies where wheat is grown. Ukraine is known as the ‘Breadbasket of Europe’ because so much grain is grown there. Ah, nice!...to be the bread basket, the feeder, the nurturer of all Europe. Born **in** the breadbasket, my grandmother or Babcia as we called her, naturally made wonderful bread! Called paska! At Easter, the paschal festival...the paska rose high and was a bit sweet...it had honey in it. Delicious bread it was. It looked something like this. Brushed with egg on top to make it shiny.



She would take her bread basket covered with an embroidered cloth to be blessed in church by the priest. Every household brought in their bread basket to be blessed.



Our Lord says he is the living bread...living bread for all the world...could we say that HE is the breadbasket for all the world? This bread is the best, for it is beyond delicious...it is the bread that sustains...and satisfies.

In Lord of the Rings books, there is a special bread called Lembas.



Bear in mind that the author of Lord of the Rings, J R R Tolkien, was a Christian. In the stories, Lembas is bread used for long journeys by the elves. The special qualities of Lembas suggest it is similar to Jesus, the “bread of life.”

Lembas has amazing powers to both sustain travelers and even bring healing to the wounded or sick. One piece of Lembas was enough to last a traveler a full day. Its delicious honey-flavor evokes images of the manna God provided Israel in the wilderness.

Here is a quote from *The Return of the King* suggesting Lembas has even more striking powers: “The Lembas had a virtue without which they would have long ago lain down to die. It did not satisfy desire, and at times Sam’s mind was filled with the memories of food, and the longing for simple bread and meats. And yet this waybread of elves had a potency that increased as travelers relied on it alone and did not mingle it with other foods. It fed the will, and it gave strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind” So too with Christ the living bread...it has potency, helping us find strength to endure.  
Author: Scott Hoezee

Isn’t it just so with our Living Bread which we consume at Holy Communion or the Eucharist. This bread, if relied upon...is our Lord’s presence in us/ whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we could ask or imagine.

Our Lord invites us into an intimate relationship by eating the living bread. He says **“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.”** We become intermingled, each a part of the other. Our Lord invites us, promises us that our spiritual hunger, our spiritual craving will be satisfied when we partake of Him. We are promised that we will live **in** Him and He **in** us.

Isn't it a reason to rejoice? Jesus tells us what we most long to hear. We are Divinely **loved**, we are Divinely **forgiven** and the Divine meal is ready...Dinner **Is** served. Amen

A few years ago American Christian pollster George Barna conducted a national survey asking simply, "**What is the phrase you most long to hear?**" The top answer was: "I love you." We would expect that. In second place was "**I forgive you**"; also not surprising. But the third most longed-for phrase **was** a bit of a surprise. It was "**Dinner is ready!**"

Jesus, especially in John's Gospel, addresses our deepest longings identified by Barna: love, forgiveness, and nourishment. The Gospel readings for the last four Sundays have come from the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. It is called 'The Bread of Life Discourse'. In it, Jesus repeatedly claims, **"I am the Bread of Life."**

For we Christians - Dinner is ready alright, and our Lord is both host and menu!

"I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven," he says. "Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Our Eucharist, Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, is more than a remembrance of what once was; it is the bread of life itself, the cup of salvation. The Lord's Supper is the very physical and tangible presence of the crucified and risen Christ incorporated into our very being!

Our Lord invites us into an intimate relationship. He says **"Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them."** Our Lord invites us, promises

us that our spiritual hunger, our spiritual craving will be satisfied when we partake of Him. We are promised that we will live **in** Him and He **in** us.

Isn't it a reason to rejoice? Jesus tells us what we most long to hear. We are Divinely **loved**, we are Divinely **forgiven** and the Divine meal is ready...Dinner **Is** served.

