An Abundant Life

Abundant life is promised to those who follow Jesus. But what is meant by abundant life? Some Christians, and much of contemporary American culture, interpret an abundant life to mean the “good life” of many fine things, an opulent lifestyle. Much of our economy and leisure time revolves around consumerism – shopping and buying things which we hope will make us happier and our lives better. But an abundance of things does not necessarily lead to an abundant life.

What does Jesus mean when he says that he came so that we may have an abundant life? Psalm 23 provides us with a good illustration of what Jesus is promising to his followers. The psalm imagines an abundant life not in material terms but in relational terms. An abundant life is one lived in the presence of God, in the company of the Lord. Whether one is in green pastures or the darkest valley, there is nothing to want, because God is present. We are in the gracious and generous care of our Lord through times of material abundance and in times of want and scarcity. This relationship between our Lord and us who are his followers is a relationship with one who knows us abundantly, who knows us by name, and who knows what we truly need to be fulfilled. The image of Jesus as our shepherd reminds us that he is with us at all times, and our relationship with him provides us all we need.
Gathering

*In preparation for worship, you may wish to set your place with a lit candle and/or place a small bowl of water nearby as a remembrance for baptism.*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

*The Lord’s My Shepherd (Brother James’ Air), arr. James L. Macbeth Bain*

Thanksgiving for Baptism
Written by Claire Embil, *University of Wisconsin Madison*

*During the thanksgiving, you may wish to gesture to remember your baptism:*
  - A light splash of water,
  - use water to trace a cross on your forehead,
  - make a sign of the cross across your body.

Just as Jesus stretched his hand over the stormy sea and said, “Peace be still,” we ask for God’s calming spirit to still the waters of anxiety that stirs inside each of us during these frightening, uncertain times.

God, we thank you for the waters of baptism that bring us closer to your grace, hope, and unending love. Thank you for water that grows and nourishes your people and planet. We pray for the people and places that do not have clean water or their source for water is threatened. We thank you for water to play in: pools, lakes and sprinklers. For water that helps us to see beauty and creation: fountains, waterfalls, and watercolor paints.

God, we thank you for all the water of the world especially the waters that washed us clean and gave us new life in you.

**Amen**
Gathering Song

*Have No Fear, Little Flock, ELW 764*

The Organ family, *vocal ensemble*

**The assembly joins in singing:**

1. Have no fear, little flock; have no fear, little flock,
   for the Father has chosen to give you the kingdom.

2. Have good cheer, little flock; have good cheer, little flock,
   for the Father will keep you in his love for ever.

3. Praise the Lord high above; praise the Lord high above,
   lift and restore you; praise the Lord high above!

4. Thankful hearts raise to God; thankful hearts raise to God;
   all things works with you; thankfull hearts raise to God!

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**Greeting and Prayer of the Day**

*Alleluia! Christ is risen.*

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**
Today’s reading is a description of life in the community following Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God’s people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

42[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Celtic Alleluia, ELW 174
Sonia Mackenzie, cantor

The cantor introduces the alleluia, then the assembly joins in singing:

Music: Fintan O’Carroll and Christopher Walker
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Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] 1“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Michael Busbey, pastoral intern
Prayers of Intercession

As we begin our prayers, together, we join in singing:

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After each petition, the assembly responds:

O God . . . **restore our life.**

We continue to hold in prayer:

**Our bishops, Elizabeth Eaton and the ELCA Churchwide staff;**

Yehiel Curry, and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod staff

**Missionaries throughout the world especially Pr. Mawien Ariik and**

Pr. Wal Luot Reat in South Sudan; and Pr. Alex LaChapelle in Nairobi,

**whom we support**

**Our ecumenical brothers and sisters in the countries of**

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

**Our community of faith, especially our pastors and staff, leadership and**

**volunteers.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,**

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Save us from the time of trial**

and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power,**

and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.
Sending

Blessing
The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The God of all grace † bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song

Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia, ELW 364, verses 1 and 4
Allison and Scott Parker, soloists

Christ has arisen, alleluia.
Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.
For our redeemer burst from the tomb,
even from death, dispelling its gloom.

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death’s fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia! Jesus is living, alleluia!

Go spread the news: he’s not in the grave.
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus’ redeeming labors are done.
Even the battle with sin is won.”

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death’s fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia! Jesus is living, alleluia!

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Dismissal

Christ is risen, just as he said. Share the good news. Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

As our service concludes, we share the peace with each other near and far.

Postlude

Together Again, Thomas Keesecker
Laurie Wit, piano

Lutheran Social Service of Illinois video
You are invited to view message from one of our ministry partners.
Special thanks to our leaders this morning:

The Rev. Richard Johnson, lead pastor and presider
Michael Busbey, pastoral intern and preacher
Anne Krentz Organ, director of music ministries
Gerry Mears, reader and intercessor
Claire Embil, thanksgiving for baptism
The Organ Family, ensemble
Sonia Mackenzie, soloist
Scott and Allison Parker, soloists
Laurie Wit, piano

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