WWJD: Jesus Shares

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – October 4 2026

19th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Nehemiah 8:9-12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Luke 14:12-24 CEB

Reflection: Psalm 145 CEB

Call to Worship: Come, for Christ invites all to the table of his generosity. We come to receive the free gift of grace that is there for all people. As we come to worship, we ask ourselves: What would Jesus do? He would serve and share, so we come as those ready to give and to receive!

Prayer: Blessed God, we gather before you in prayer. We seek your love and your grace to be with us in our lives on this day. We come together to ask of ourselves what it is our Savior would do. We come to worship with a Spirit of truth and light as we come together as your people. We celebrate the Father that watches over us, helping us in our daily lives. We celebrate the Son, whose great love for us was demonstrated on the cross. We come to celebrate the Holy Spirit, whose presence we welcome into our lives so that your holy grace may continue to work within us. We pray you will help us to welcome everyone into your loving care. We pray you will help us to share your grace with a world in need of mercy and care. Help us to see the good in each other and to be the good we wish to see. May you continue to teach us what is right and good so that we may continue to grow in wisdom. May you continue to challenge us so that we may grow in faith. Help us to sing your praises this day, Lord. May we gather in the peace and love that you offer us each and every day. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 145

> ***14*** *The Lord supports all who fall down, straightens up all who are bent low.* ***15*** *All eyes look to you, hoping, and you give them their food right on time,* ***16*** *opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing.* ***17*** *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, faithful in all his deeds.* ***18*** *The Lord is close to everyone who calls out to him, to all who call out to him sincerely.* ***19*** *God shows favor to those who honor him, listening to their cries for help and saving them. (Psalm 145:14-19 CEB+)*

We read the words of Psalm 145 and hear how God will provide for us. That we will find all that we need is with the Lord. We are reminded that Christ shares from the bounty of many blessings so that we may have life and have it in abundance. Do you call out to God when you are in need? Do you seek to live like Christ? Who can you lift in your prayers this week? Who can you help with your service? We should always ask ourselves: what would Jesus do?

Prayer: Most merciful God, we seek your grace and your mercy as we gather together. We turn to you in prayer with the joys and concerns that we have in our lives this day. We pray for the strength to do what is right and to walk in the way of salvation. We ask ourselves what Jesus would do so that we may strive to be more like our blessed Savior. We pray that you will grant us wisdom so that we may learn to think and act more like Jesus every day. May you know the prayers we have spoken aloud and the prayers of our hearts. We pray you will be

with us in the good, the bad, and the unknown. Help to remember your love is with us in our laughter and in our tears. May we know your grace in our sorrow and in our rejoicing. Let your steadfast love and faithfulness guide us all the days of our lives. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture readings for today come from the Common English Bible. Our first reading is from Nehemiah chapter 8 verses 9 through 12.

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all of the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Don't mourn or weep." They said this because all the people wept when they heard the words of the Instruction. 10 "Go, eat rich food, and drink something sweet," he said to them, "and send portions of this to any who have nothing ready! This day is holy to our Lord. Don't be sad, because the joy from the Lord is your strength!" 11 The Levites also calmed all of the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy. Don't be sad!" 12 Then all of the people went to eat and to drink, to send portions, and to have a great celebration, because they understood what had been said to them. (Nehemiah 8:9-12 CEB+)

Our second reading is from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 23 through 26.

23 I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. 24 After giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me." 25 He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me." 26 Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you broadcast the death of the Lord until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26 CEB+)

Our final reading is from Luke chapter 14 verses 12 through 24.

12 Then Jesus said to the person who had invited him, "When you host a lunch or dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return and that will be your reward. 13 Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. 14 And you will be blessed because they can't repay you. Instead, you will be repaid when the just are resurrected." 15 When one of the dinner guests heard Jesus' remarks, he said to Jesus, "Happy are those who will feast in God's kingdom." 16 Jesus replied, "A certain man hosted a large dinner and invited many people. 17 When it was time for the dinner to begin, he sent his servant to tell the invited guests, 'Come! The dinner is now ready.' 18 One by one, they all began to make excuses. The first one told him, 'I bought a farm and must go and see it. Please excuse me.' 19 Another said, 'I bought five teams of oxen, and I'm going to check on them. Please excuse me.' 20 Another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' 21 When he returned, the servant reported these excuses to his master. The master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go quickly to the city's streets, the busy ones and the side streets, and bring the poor, crippled, blind, and lame.' 22 The servant said, 'Master, your instructions have been followed and there is still room.' 23 The master said to the servant, 'Go to the

highways and back alleys and urge people to come in so that my house will be filled. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'" (Luke 14:12-24 CEB+)

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

This next message in our WWJD, "What Would Jesus Do?" series is about how Jesus shares. I thought it was appropriate to think about that on a special Sunday, World Communion Sunday, where we think about the way that we come to the table together. That we join together at this table that Christ shares with all who seek him. We share this among many peoples, among many nations, among many generations. And that this is a gift shared with all. I thought it was a perfect time to think about the way that we need to try to emulate Christ in the way that we share in our own lives. That we are called to ask ourselves what Jesus would do and then to do it. Once again, we are looking at our gospel reading as the main vehicle for this message.

In today's reading, we have Jesus being invited in to dine with one of the Pharisees. As he is dining with them, he makes some observations. He tells the person that invited him that if you really want to share what you have, that you shouldn't invite friends and family, that you shouldn't invite the wealthy. Because in return, they'll invite you and you'll just be in a cycle of doing each other favors. He says instead to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Because you'll be blessed because they can't repay you. Part of what Jesus is sharing here is this insight that if all that we do is so that we can be repaid by the people we're doing it for, we're never doing anything out of the kindness of our own hearts. We're never showing true generosity because it's all things we'll get paid back for. What Jesus is saying is that when we share from the heart and we share with those who cannot pay us back, then we are truly showing that we understand what generosity is. That if all we do is share with people who can share back, then we'll never understand what it is to give. Jesus tells this to them and one of the people there remarks, "happy are those who feast in God's kingdom."

I think it's an apt reply because it raises the question about who will feast in God's kingdom. It also helps us to think about the other examples of generosity we have in our readings today. Because when we think about what it is Christ would do, we see that Christ shares without thinking about what he gets in return. It's to make sure that everybody is cared for, everybody is taken care of. Which is something that we hear in Nehemiah. The people hear the words of instruction and are informed that this day is holy to the Lord. That this is not a day to be sorrowful, but a day for joy. And because it's a day for joy, they should eat rich food and they should drink something sweet. But that's not enough because they're told to share, to send portions to anyone who has nothing ready so that everybody is included. Because part of what God is doing here is reminding the people that they are to support each other. That they are never alone but are a community together. They go out and they send portions to those who have nothing ready. They're not called to ask questions about it either. They are just called to share. They are not told to check and make sure it only goes to people that deserve it. They are told this day is holy, and that they should make sure everybody can participate. I think in Nehemiah it really is as simple as that. They want to make sure everybody that can participate does participate. Everyone shares so that everyone is able to take part in this holy day.

That's what we begin to hear in the story that Jesus is about to tell. Because as they sit there, Jesus replies to the one that declares that happy are those who feast in God's kingdom.

Jesus tells the story of a man who hosted a large dinner. He invites many people. But when the feast begins, everybody begins to make excuses. Everyone is too busy. They have business they have to attend to, a farm that has been purchased, five teams of oxen to check on, a recent marriage. Everyone rejects the generous offer. So instead, he invites the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame and finds that there is still room. So, he goes to the highways and the back alleys so that the house will be filled. In many ways, this is Jesus talking about the Israelites. He is talking about the legal experts and the Pharisees. He is talking about his own ministry. They are rejecting this gift being shared with them, this gift of salvation. And if they won't take it to share with others, then God will take it out to share it with others. That first it's the least and the last. Those parts of society that are overlooked and shunned. The people that are kicked off to the side. The ones people cross to the other side of the street to avoid. They are invited in. They have become the honored guests. But it doesn't stop there because there is still room at God's table. So, next come the people on highways and in the back alleys, basically the nations. The places outside of Israel. The Gentiles are invited in. They respond to this gift. They accept what was shared with them. It's a cautionary tale about thinking that we know who it is God wants at his table. It is a cautionary tale about being too busy and too good to accept God's grace.

Because he invites everyone. That's what we hear about when we remember the way Christ shares in 1 Corinthians. Because they are talking about establishing the Lord's Supper and how it's something we do to remember the generosity of Christ. That he offered his life on the cross. We remember that he gave his body for us. We recall the covenant of his blood, washing us clean. We are offered forgiveness. That we are to remember that generosity every time that we eat the bread and drink from the cup. Because it is a reminder of how much has been shared with us.

So, we have to ask ourselves, what would Jesus do? If Jesus is faced with a situation where there are people in need, Jesus shares. And not just with the expected. Jesus shares with those whose society has forgotten. Jesus shares with everyone. But like we talked about last week, he came to save sinners. Jesus shares with those who are in need because they are the ones who respond. The people who already feel they can take care of themselves don't respond because they are so full of themselves, they don't see the places where they lack. They don't see that they need others. As Christians, we are called to remember that we all need each other. And so, we share with one another knowing that God has shared salvation with us. We share the many blessings we have been given with each other. Because no matter what it is, Jesus shares. Shares in love. Shares in food. Shares in comfort. Shares in compassion. Jesus even shares our grief. Because his love for us is that deep.

I think it's important that we ask ourselves that question. What would Jesus do? Because it guides us in what we should be doing. It guides us in how we can help each other and support each other. It reminds us that we are called to remember one another and to support each other in love. That we are called to build each other up in Christ. That we are called to remember Christ's generosity every time we come to his table. To drink of the cup. To eat the bread. To share together in our Savior. I pray that every time we come to this table, we come to have our hearts renewed in generosity so that we may do even more. That we may share more because of our risen Savior. I pray that as we think about all the things that we could be doing, that we ask ourselves the important question: What would Jesus do? We ask so that we

may be more like him in all that we are and in all that we do. May we always remember that no matter what the situation is, Jesus shares. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – WWJD

Our series has us looking at what we think Jesus would do. After all, if Christ is the example we are to live by, shouldn't we ask what he would do? Each week we explore a different way that Jesus interacted with people so that we can learn to be more like him. We will explore how we can welcome others, how we share, how Jesus taught, and the way that he still challenges us to day. We should always be willing to go back to that simple WWJD: What Would Jesus Do?

9/27: Jesus Welcomes

10/4: Jesus Shares

10/11: Jesus Teaches

10/18: Jesus Challenges

Neoga Grace UMC
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Worship 8:15am

Etna UMC
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