

(organ music) (faintly speaking) (faintly speaking) (overlapping voices drown out other sounds) (faintly speaking) (overlapping voices drown out other sounds)

- Sing for Him a new song. (muffled speaking) (regal organ music)

Woman: God, Tim's got it down so low. That's it. Hoo, disaster. (congregation singing)

- It is not easy to face our sin, or to admit that we are less than we pretend to be. We find it easier to raise protective barriers than to break down our defenses and allow God to change us. Share now in the power of honest confession. Let us join in the prayer of confession found on page 890 in your handbook. Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent. For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen. May Almighty God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, cleansing us from all our sins, and restoring us to the light of the knowledge of God's glory. In the face of Jesus Christ, our savior, Amen. You may be seated.

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination. Open our hearts and minds, oh God, by the power of your Holy Spirit, so that, as the word is read and proclaimed, we may hear your message with joy this day. Amen. The first lesson is taken from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the fourth chapter, beginning with verse 25. "So, then, putting away falsehood, "let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, "for we are members of one another. "Be angry, but do not sin, "do not let the sun go down on your anger, "and do not make room for the Devil. "Thieves must give up stealing. "Rather, let them labor and work honestly "with their own hands, "so as to have something to share with the needy. "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, "but only what is useful for building up, "as there is need, "so that your words may give grace to those who hear. "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, "with which you were marked with a seal "for the day of redemption. "Put away from you all bitterness, and wrath, "and anger, and wrangling, and slander, "together with all malice. "And be kind to one another, "tender-hearted, forgiving one another, "as God in Christ has forgiven you. "Therefore, be imitators of God, "as beloved children, "and live in love, "as Christ loved us, "and gave himself up for us, "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." This is the word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

- The second reading is from the Gospel of John, chapter six, verses 35, and 41 to 51. "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.' "Then the Jews began to complain about him, "because he said, 'I am the bread "'that came down from heaven.' "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?' " Jesus answered them, 'do not complain

among yourselves. "No one can come to me unless sent by the Father "who sent me. "And I will raise that person up on the last day. "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. "Not that anyone has seen the Father, "except the one who is from God. "He has seen the Father. "Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. "I am the bread of life. "Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, "and they died. "This is the bread that comes down from Heaven, "so that one may eat of it and not die. "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." This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

- Reading the Gospel in Dutch-

- This is the Gospel of John, according to the Netherlands, the Dutch translation. Today, I would like to give honor to God for this opportunity to stand here, to proclaim the message, and to express my appreciation to the Dean of the Chapel, Dean Willimon, and the associate Dean, Debra Brazell, for this opportunity. A few weeks ago, I visited a friend of mine, and we talked about the situation in Rwanda. Praying, wishing, and hoping, that the international community would bring an end to this dreadful situation. As we talked, my friend's seven- or eight-year-old daughter was around, and she had a lot of questions. Specifically, questions about the geographic location of where all of this was taking place. So her mother took a globe and pointed out to her where Rwanda was, and Zaire, and what was happening, and how the people were moving from Rwanda to Zaire. And the little girl became afraid, I would say, horrified, insisting that we could not allow people to go to Zaire, or they will all die. We would never be able to see them again. And her mother tried to assure her that things would be okay. The child disappeared for a while, and then reappeared with books. And she tried to share with us her worldview, her understanding, of what happens in Zaire. You see, this child was educated to believe that the people in Zaire were cannibals. They ate other people. So she was really afraid. As I listened to this child, I thought, how fearful it must be for most of the world's people, who are devoured up by economic and political cannibals, chewing their souls, and draining them of all hope, power, and self-esteem. The disparity between the world's people is great. We categorize the world into First World, Second World, and Third World peoples, with the First World people being the most economical and political powerful. While the Third World people are the poorest. The desolate. The irony of this, however, is that the Third World people possess most of the world's raw, natural resources. However, they continue to be the poorest. Not because they are lesser ilks, but because of continued domination by peoples of the other World. When they come to the international negotiation table, they come not as equals. They come as price-takers, rather than price-makers. They must settle, or be settled. They must sign suicidal peace treaties, or be torn to pieces. They must comply, or be labeled, complacent communists, or immoral terrorists, or a combination of these adjectives. The early Christians knew, too well, what it meant to be at the bottom of the barrel. The last rung of the social ladder. You see, they were the minorities among the minorities. It is therefore no wonder that their central practice was misrepresented and stereotyped. Yes, the early Christians were said to be cannibalistic. They were turned to these people who ate each other's flesh and drank each other's blood. All because the Eucharist, the Lord's supper that we celebrate, was central in their belief. You see, in the early Church, the teachings and practice of the Church, were guarded very closely. That's because of the persecution. And so many people outside of the Church did not understand what was happening with the Christians. And we know, if we don't know

what's going on, that we just make it up. We know too well in this culture how ignorance, or the lack of knowledge about other people's cultures and beliefs leads to stereotyping. In our text today, the Lord utters these words:

- Speaking Dutch "I am the living bread "that came down from Heaven. "Anyone eating this bread shall live forever." This text continues with an invitation that we eat on this flesh, and that is the modest, English interpretation of it. The Greek renders it that we chew on this flesh. And drink this blood. So that we might have a full life in Christ. A life that is rooted in our baptismal vows. A life of reconciliation. A life that bears witness to the redeeming works of Christ. The Eucharist, or the Lord's supper that we celebrate, is central for our understanding of Christ's redemptive work. The Eucharist calls us to experience a newness in Christ. This newness is both a vertical and horizontal relationship. The Eucharist expresses God's relationship to us, and our relationship with each other. So as we come around the Eucharist table, we are invited to come so that we might be one in the Spirit with Christ. So that together we can come with one voice, glorifying God, and joining with angels and archangels and a company of hosts crying, "holy, holy, holy, "God of power and might, "Heaven and Earth are full of your glory, "Hosanna in the highest." When we render praise and thanks to God, for his redemptive work, then Saint Cyril of Jerusalem says, "we move from the Earthly fear, "and enter into the opportunity to meet God "in his very presence." In the book of Colossians, the writer refers to this as the ability to set our minds on things above, so that we might be here in Christ. In the Eucharist, we are called to draw near to God, so that we might experience grace, and mercy, to help us in a time of need. We're also reminded that, while we worship in this presence of God, that if we remember that we have sinned against our brother and sister, to leave a gift at the altar. You see, this is where we enter into the horizontal relating with God. For in order for us to understand what it means to be in that vertical relationship with God, then we must be faithful in our horizontal relating, one to the other. So therefore, if we come to the table and we remember that we have sinned against a brother or sister, the scripture says, "leave your gift at the altar, "and go be reconciled to that brother and sister." For Christ says to us, "How can you love the Father "that you have not seen? "If you continue to hate your brother and sister "that you live with daily?" In the Eucharist, when we come into God's presence to celebrate this supper, we pray that God would send His Holy Spirit upon the people and upon the gifts, the wine, and the bread. This is our way that we enter into God's horizontal, reconciling work in Christ. The Eucharist brings us together as one people in Christ, from the east, from the west, far and near, weak and strong, Third Worlds or First Worlds. For in Christ, we are one people. For isn't the bread that we partake in the body of Christ? And because we who are many participate and partake of one bread, then we, too, are one in Christ. When we experience the Eucharistic meal by being in God's presence and by the ability to love each other in the Church, it does not end there. But we are called and challenged, that we should take this experience with us in our daily lives so that Eucharist that we celebrate can become for us a practice of word and deed. I grew up in a small farm community in Suriname, where the people were Christians, Muslim, Hindus, you name it. My family that I lived in was Catholic. And we only saw a priest about three times a year. And whenever the priest came, all Christians went. Because that was the opportunity to assemble together as a Church. And after the Holy Communion, all families were given a portion of the bread to take back home with them, so that, by our daily practice, the Eucharist would be alive and present with us. The Eucharist, once we take it back with us, helps us to realize, and it's not just the physical bread, but the spirit of the Eucharist, calls us to realize that, once we live in Christ, then we are called to a life of radical extremism. We are called to be radical in our

love. We can no longer, once we experience the spirit of the Eucharist, have a hate for each other, but rather we are called to love God with all our hearts, and with all our mind, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourself. We are called to love our enemies. To do good to those who hate us and persecute us. We are called to a radical life of justice. A justice that Amos speaks about in the Old Testament, that rolls down like rivers of water. A justice that helps us to know that we cannot be complacent as long as there is injustice anywhere. We are challenged to a life of righteousness. Not a life that is filled with double-talk, and political correctness, but rather a life that will help us to say like the Apostle Paul, that we bear the marks of Christ in our bodies, and therefore, we are not ashamed of the Gospel of God, for it's our power unto salvation. Today, God calls us to eat his flesh, to drink his blood, and as we do that, we can stand with Martin Luther and say, "here I stand, I am assured."

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. God of creation, we thank you that you loved us enough to take on our flesh, and redeem it through the death and resurrection of your Son. Give us the courage to eat your bread, and drink your blood, that we might abide in you, and you in us. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of abundance, we have too often settled for so much less than you would give us. We work for the mana which perishes, when we could have eternal life. We look for ways to secure our transitory lives, when we could have true security in Christ. We seek out an existence and struggle to survive when we are offered life abundant. Our lives are spent in meaningless, frantic activity, when we could know fulfillment and a sense of purpose through Christ. You want so much more for us. You have offered so much more to us. Help us to want it and accept it for ourselves. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of mercy, as you show compassion and mercy to us, so you call us to be compassionate and merciful to one another. Through the Eucharist, you call us to a life of unity, where what impacts one of us impacts all of us. Remove the protective barriers that we erect around our hearts, for fear that we might be used up by the needs we encounter. Remind us that love is increased by being given, rather than by being hoarded. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of power, we ask for wholeness, for ourselves, for the Church, and for the world. The complexities of our world are overwhelming, and sometimes we know not how to respond. Give us guidance. Show us what we can do to make a difference. Do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of freedom, we pray for those who are held captive, as hostages, as prisoners of conscience, as victims of injustice all over the world. Sustain them through their trials. Offer hope to their families, and bring them quickly to freedom. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of the wounded heart, we pray for those who are sick or injured. We give thanks that you are a God who enters into the suffering with us to bring healing and transformation. We are especially mindful of those who are victims of violence. Images of blood and destruction are nightly fare, and threaten to cheapen life. Remind us of the sacredness and the dignity of all your people. Teach us the way of tolerance, compassion, respect, and peace. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of comfort and ever-present help, we pray for those who are suffering some loss, for those who are grieving the death of a loved one, for the loss of a relationship, for the unemployed facing uncertainty about the future, and for those whose way of life has been lost because of economic pressures or ill health. Touch them with your healing presence, and help us to reach out to them in ways that will ease their pain.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of every time and place, we pray for those who live without the comfort and security of home. Open our eyes to see the homeless that live in our own city, and across the United States. Make us mindful of the millions of people who have been dislocated by war in Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, and so many other places. Show us ways to respond that lead to peace and humanity. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. God of hope, stay close to us, lest we lose our way and our hearts. Encourage us, root us in you, make us strong on your flesh and your blood. Make us so desire the life that you would give us that our only fear is your absence, and our great joy is your love. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen. As those who share the bread of life, let us stand as we exchange signs of God's peace with one another. Let us offer ourselves and our gifts and thanksgiving to the Lord. You may be seated. (dramatic organ music) (choir singing) (regal organ music) (congregation singing)

- We invite you to join in the Great Thanksgiving found on page 17 in your handbook. The Lord be with you.

- And also with you.

- Lift up your hearts.

- We lift them to the Lord.

- Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. (muffled) It is right, and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of Heaven and Earth. You formed us in your image, and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. When nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. And so with your people on Earth and all the company of Heaven, we praise your name, and join their unending hymn. (organ music) ♪ Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, ♪ ♪ Lord of power and might, ♪ ♪ Heaven and Earth are full of your glory, ♪ ♪ Hosanna in the highest ♪ ♪ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, ♪ ♪ Hosanna ♪ ♪ In the highest ♪ Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ. Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering death and resurrection, you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. At his ascension, you exalted him to sit and reign with you at your right hand. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said, "take, eat. "This is my body, given for you. "Do this in remembrance of me." And when the supper was over, he took the cup, he gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said, "drink from this, all of you. "This is the blood of the new covenant, "poured out for you and for many for the remission of sins. "Do this as often as you drink it, "in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a Holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the Mystery of Faith. (organ music) ♪ Christ has died, ♪ ♪ Christ is risen, ♪ ♪ Christ will come again. ♪ Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on

these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ redeemed by his blood. By your spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. (organ music) ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ And now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray together. 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 who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, because we all partake of the one loaf. The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. The cup over which we give thanks, is a sharing in the blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, given for you. (organ plays) We invite you to come and feast at the Lord's table. The servers, come forward. Ushers. (regal organ music) (choir singing) Please stand for the prayer after communion. Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery, in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your spirit, to give ourselves for others. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. (organ music) (congregation sings) The grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you and keep you. (choir sings) (organ plays)