



Living in God's Abundance

O God beyond all praising, we worship you today and sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay; for we can only wonder at ev'ry gift you send, at blessings without number and mercies without end: we lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word, we honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord (Evangelical Lutheran Worship #880).

These words set to the tune of Gustav Holst's "The Planets" begin to piece together a stunning tapestry of what our life in Christ is all about: A life of immeasurable giftedness woven with the thread of unending gratitude. Imagine for a moment the abundance implied by the claim that God's blessings are without number and God's mercies are without end. Can we even imagine what that kind of abundance looks like? Do we dare acknowledge that such abundance even exists?

If we believe that abundance is not some illusory pipe dream, but is in fact a reality of the "God beyond all praising" then how we respond to this God and to the world which this God loves matters. If God truly gives in abundance, can our response be anything less?

On Sunday, June 30th, we will gather together at our Annual Meeting to reflect upon where God has led us this past year, and to discern through a mission budget where God might take us in the coming year. Though the numbers contained in the mission budget may not feel particularly flashy from year to year, what they represent is nothing less than our response to a "great and mighty Lord" whose abundant love for us knows no boundaries.

So, what shall our response be to this God, who according to the hymn writer, cannot be praised enough? In a world which finds itself all too often adrift in a sea of scarcity, is it possible that the God of abundant blessings is calling each of us to be an ark of abundant

blessing? If what the hymn writer confesses is true and God's blessings cannot even begin to be counted, does scarcity even exist?

I believe the challenge for us in the coming year will be to overcome the perception of scarcity, both in our personal lives as well as our life together in this community of faith called Incarnate Word. Whether we feel like it or not, there is much to be done here in this place and in the world to which we are called to serve.

Then hear O Gracious Savior, accept the love we bring, that we who know your favor may serve you as our King; and whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill, we'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still (Evangelical Lutheran Worship #880).

Peace and Love in abundance,

Pastor Doug