

**PENTECOST:  
A TIME TO EXPERIENCE GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT ALIVE AND ACTIVE**

**Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Proper 12**

**July 26, 2009**

**2 Kings 4:42-44**

**Psalm 145:10-18**

**Ephesians 3:14-21**

**John 6:1-21**

**A Miracle of Context**

Recently, our congregation held a “going away” party for a family who is moving to Chicago. The scene looked like a movie set: bright sunshine, a pool, a grill and griller, hamburgers and hot dogs (and the occasional veggie burger), children throwing the ball around, etc. A great New England summer party – until the unthinkable happened: we ran out of hot dogs!

To the humorous delight of the vegetarians, the meat eaters swung into action. Of course, the first person called to this barbeque miscue was the pastor – me! What do we do, Jason? I summoned a twenty-something and commissioned him with the weighty task of going to the grocery store to get more franks. Upon his return, the chairperson of the Stewardship Committee promptly repaid the young lad without having to submit a check-request form, and the party continued to everyone’s great satisfaction.

This is not a contemporary retelling of John 6:1-21 or 2 Kings 4:42-44. Neither is it a hymn of praise for God’s provisions as in Psalm 145:10-18 or Ephesians 3:14-21. This is a “real-life” story from the lived experience of our church. They may be similar stories but they are fundamentally different. In 2 Kings and John, miracles happened! God multiplied very little into enough sustenance to feed and nourish large crowds. The unbelievable – the divine – intervened and masses of unknowing people experienced the provisions of God.

For the most part, that did not happen at our “going away” party. Instead of a miracle, we went to the grocery store. The Bible stories emphasized the impossibility of the situation. We had a willing individual, an equipped vehicle, enough money, good roads from our house to the store, and a grocery within a few miles. In other words, our context did not necessitate a miracle – our context *is* a miracle.

When we look throughout our shrinking globe at the staggering data that describes world hunger, the miracle of our context is overwhelming. A genuine understanding of the provisions that we take for granted compels us to sing the songs of the Psalm and offer up

prayers of thanksgiving like the one found in the passage from Ephesians. But even more importantly, it also compels us to work toward creating “a miracle of context” worldwide.

This week’s Reflection was prepared by the Rev. K. Jason Coker, pastor of Wilton Baptist Church in Wilton, Connecticut. Visit [www.wiltonbaptist.org](http://www.wiltonbaptist.org) to learn more about the ministries of Wilton Baptist Church. Rev. Coker is an ordained minister with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

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**This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Estonia –** With thanks for God’s many gifts: for the restoration of Bible work in Estonia and for donors whose support helps with the continuation of the Bible Society’s mission, and with prayers for funding to continue translating the Old Testament into modern Estonian, and that people will be encouraged to read the Bible and make it relevant to their daily lives; **Lithuania –** With thanks for God’s blessing in allowing the Bible to unite all the country’s churches, and with prayers for the country’s young people, that they learn the Christian values they are taught and that the Word of God will dwell in their families, and with prayers that children grow in love, truth, and trust, and may young people grow stronger in hope; **Latvia –** With thanks to God for supporters who, though needy themselves, give from their hearts, and with thanks to God for the ability to bring Good News to hospitals by donating Bibles and producing a special Scripture booklet, and with prayers for the Study Bible scheduled to be completed next year, and for the completion of the new interconfessional Bible translation.

**Activity Corner: “Leftovers” Mobile**

Supplies needed: Bible; 8-1/2” x 11” construction paper (assorted colors); wire hangers (one for each member of the household); patterns in the shape of loaves of bread and fish (approximately 5” x 2-1/2”); string; pens/pencils; scissors; hole puncher.

Read 2 Kings 4:42-44 and John 6:1-13. Both stories focus on hungry people getting fed, with food left over. What is to be learned from these stories? Take note of what Jesus says in John 6:12. In the United States, nearly 30 million tons of food are thrown away every year – approximately one third of all the food that is purchased. What does your household do with leftover food?

Create a “leftovers” mobile by tracing and cutting out five loaves of bread and two fish. On the back of each of these seven items, write the days of the week (one day for each item). Punch a hole at the top of each and attach them to a wire hanger, using various lengths of string to create a mobile effect. Use the mobile throughout the week as a reminder to focus on global hunger. Think about things members of your household can do to contribute toward alleviating hunger in your community. Guided by the assigned day of the week, write down on each loaf of bread or fish on the mobile how much food was leftover at the end of the day and the action taken. At the end of the week, review these actions and consider donating non-perishable food items to a local food bank or church food pantry. Read Psalm 145:10-18 as a closing prayer.