

**Sunday August 2, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – Matthew 14:13-21  
“You Give Them Something”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: “Name a time when someone gave you an extraordinary gift.”

**Matthew 14:13-21. Context.** This week's reading tells the story of the feeding of the 5000. This episode is clearly central to the gospel story as a whole: it occurs six times in the four gospels (twice each in Mark and Matthew – the second time, of 4000 – once in Luke and John). Here Matthew emphasizes the eucharistic dimension of the event in the way he reports the blessing and breaking of the loaves (as at his last supper with his disciples), and emphasizes the messianic dimension by adding the phrase, "besides women and children," stressing the magnitude of the feeding that anticipates the abundance of the messianic banquet. Not accidentally, Matthew tells this story immediately following the report of the death of John the Baptist who was murdered as a party favor at a banquet held by King Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who in turn had been the central figure in the massacre of the Innocents of the Christmas story.

**Read Matthew 14:13-21**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read Matthew 14:13-21 again**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- What was Jesus' motivation to be with the crowd and cure the sick (v. 14)?
- Notice the contrast between the disciples and Jesus. Where the disciples' answer was to send the crowds away (v. 15) and then point to scarcity (v. 17), Jesus' response was to minister to the crowd's needs and envision abundance. What do we learn about the disciples? What do we learn about Jesus from this story?
- How are we too often like the disciples in their desire to send “needy” people away and also focus on their own lack of resources?
- Notice the deliberate actions of Jesus in verse 19. Jesus “takes” the food, looks up to heaven, blesses and breaks the bread, and gives to his disciples. Notice, too, in verse 20

that there were twelve full baskets remaining (a likely reference to the twelve tribes of Israel). Can you recall another time that these same actions take place in Jesus' ministry? Read Matthew 26:26-30. Why do you think there is such similarity? What might that mean for our interpretation of this miracle story? What might that mean for how we understand the Communion ritual?

- This is the only miracle story told by all the Gospels. Why do you think this was such an important story to tell? [It reveals Jesus in line with Moses and as the giver of life.]

### **Read Matthew 14:13-21 again**

#### **Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Giver of life, give us contentment for the bread of life you provide. Give us the eyes of faith to see your presence and your abundance all around us. Give us willing hands to serve those around us, so that they too might experience the abundant life that comes only from you. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

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.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.