

Trilingual Church Service in Llanelli 2023

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Energy generation is a very important topic of our time. I'm sure you will all agree with me on that. In politics, in the public debate, we are often talking about energy production and energy security. Where do we get the energy we need for our modern lives? How can we use energy more efficiently? Above all, what is environmentally friendly energy? Of course, this is mostly about electricity, energy from fossil fuels or from alternative, so-called green energy sources. It's about the energy that determines our very energy-dependent modern life and keeps it running.

But there is also a completely different form of energy. Energy that can definitely help us in life. A form of energy that corresponds more to the original meaning of the Greek word *ENERGEIA*. Energeia translated simply means "effectiveness" or "activity". In the Greek language world of the Bible, in the New Testament, energy is also understood more in this way, as something that develops a particular effectiveness.

Our modern understanding of energy focuses mainly on physical forms and quantities. But there is also a spiritual form of energy that contains a very large potential. This is a form of energy that we need just as urgently and perhaps even more urgently again today for our lives. An energy that is not only green, renewable, but that can actually be easily produced. For which we do not need additional power plants and high-voltage lines.

However, we need to make this form of energy accessible to us again. Perhaps even by focusing less so one-sidedly and exclusively on the physical forms of energy, that is, on the material. The Bible is only about the form of spiritual energy meant here. For example, in the New Testament stories of the feeding miracles or in Saint Paul's letters. This energy does not come from power plants or from the splitting of an atomic nucleus. But it can just as easily unfold a wonderful chain reaction. This spiritual and human energy is released, for example, by simply sharing a piece of bread. This is the subject of a story from the long ago post-war period. But it is just as topical as the two thousand year old stories of the Bible.

The story goes like this: An old doctor had died and his children set about sorting out the estate. There was heavy old furniture, precious pictures and many books. In a delicate glass cabinet, the father had kept his mementos: fine glasses, old porcelain, travel souvenirs of all kinds. In the lowest shelf, in one corner, there was a strange hard, grey lump. On closer inspection, it turned out to be an ancient, dried-up piece of bread. How did it get under all those treasures in the glass cupboard? The housekeeper could explain: During the years of hunger at the end of the war, the doctor had been very ill and then exhausted. A doctor colleague who had been called in had murmured something about good food. But where would it come from? Then a friend of the doctor's brought a piece of good bread that he himself had been given. The doctor was in tears when he held it in his hands. But when the friend had gone, he did not want to eat it, but sent it to the family in the neighbour's house, whose little daughter lay ill: "The young life needs it more than I old man." But the woman in the neighbour's house carried the piece of bread to the old refugee woman, who had taken shelter in the attic and was still a complete stranger. She took it to her daughter, who was living in a cellar with two small children. And the daughter remembered the doctor who had previously treated her sick children free of charge and who was now lying there himself, sick and exhausted. The doctor recognised the bread immediately and was deeply moved: "If this still exists, that people share their last piece of bread with each other, I am not worried about all of us," he said. "This bread has filled many people without anyone eating it. It is a holy bread." Who knows how many times later the old doctor looked at it thoughtfully and took strength and hope from it in oppressive days. His children felt that their father was closer to them in this old piece of bread than in the expensive furniture and accumulated art treasures. Here they held his legacy in their hands, and it was to remain with them as a mysterious force for life. They shared it in memory of their father and of the one who had once broken the bread of love.

So much for the story. Basically, this doctor acted according to the principle as exemplified by Jesus and suggested by Paul. He shared bread. In doing so, he set off a chain of reactions among his fellow human beings. The sharing has released a hope-giving and wonderful energy among the people. We can experience this for ourselves in our lives today. We only need to try it. It is very simple: Share something with someone whom I



Bread made by Linda for our Service of Thanksgiving in Llanelli

can help or simply make happy. And perhaps we can immediately think of such moments and encounters? And we can actually feel something of this wonderful energy that lies in sharing. Paul says that God loves a cheerful giver. This is a reference to this energy source of sharing for our common human life.

And there is a second great energy source of life and living together. The second great source of energy is gratitude. In the biblical feeding stories up to the Lord's Supper, Jesus always gives thanks first before sharing. With Jesus, this is not just a pious ritual or a formal courtesy. Jesus knows what energy gratitude can release in us. Hopefully we can think of examples of this from our own lives too. When was the last time I was really thankful from the bottom of my heart and what did that trigger in me? Didn't it actually electrify me, so to speak?

Today I am simply grateful that we can worship here together again in a service with three different languages and with us from different churches, but united in the spirit of Christ. We share our Christian traditions with each other and today even tea and cake for the first time afterwards. We thank God together for this fellowship in a world in which people unfortunately still quarrel and divide. In a world where we fight and wage wars over energy sources and other resources. In this world, it is important for us Christians to discover and use God's energy source for our lives. So that we can be an example for our fellow human beings and also open the eyes of others to the energy sources of sharing and thanksgiving that God has given us. Amen.

*May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.*

Many blessings, Pastor Kai