

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 16, 2023

9:00 am

Prelude

Welcome

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, who greets us in this and every season, whose word never fails, whose promise is sure. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors.

Merciful God, **we confess that we have sinned. We have hurt our community. We have squandered your blessings. We have hoarded your bounty. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

Silence is kept for reflection.

Righteous God, **we confess that we have sinned. We have failed to be honest. We have lacked the courage to speak. We have spoken falsely. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

Silence is kept for reflection.

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst. God offers boundless grace when we fail. Claim the gift of God's mercy: you are freed and forgiven in the name of ✙ Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn ELW #533 "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

1. Open now thy gates of beauty, Zion, let me enter there, where my soul in joyful duty waits for God who answers prayer. Oh, how blessed is this place, filled with solace, light, and grace!
2. Gracious God, I come before thee; come thou also unto me; where we find thee and adore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be. To my hear, Oh, enter thou, let it be thy temple now!
3. Here thy praise is gladly chanted, here thy seed is duly sown; let my soul, where it is planted, bring forth precious sheaves alone, so that all I hear may be fruitful unto life in me.

4. Thou my faith increase and quicken, let me keep thy gift divine; howsoe'er temptations thicken, may thy word still o'er me shine as my guiding star through life, as my comfort in all strife.

5. Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done indeed; may I undisturbed draw near thee while thou dost thy people feed. Here of life the fountain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

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Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

Psalm: Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

¹You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be fulfilled.

²**To you, the one who answers prayer, to you all flesh shall come.**

³Our sins are stronger than we are, but you blot out our transgressions.

⁴**Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple.**

⁵Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.

⁶**You make firm the mountains by your power; you are girded about with might.**

⁷You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

⁸**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.

¹⁰**You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.**

¹¹You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.

¹²**May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy.**

¹³May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11

There is no condemnation for those who live in Christ. God sent Christ to accomplish what the law was unable to do: condemn sin and free us from its death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart. *Alleluia.*
(Deut. 30:14)

The Holy Gospel according to the book of Matthew, beginning with the 13th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

In Matthew's gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!"

¹⁸Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day ELW #679 "For the Fruit of All Creation"

- 1. For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God. For these gifts to ev'ry nation, thanks be to God. For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping, future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.**
- 2. In the just reward of labor, God's will is done. In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done. In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.**
- 3. For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God. For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God. For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us, most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.**

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Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Offering Prayer

God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The Great Thanksgiving

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. **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Distribution Hymn ELW #491 "*Come, Let us Eat*"

- 1. Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread, come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread. Our Lord's body let us take together, our Lord's body let us take together.**
- 2. Come, let us drink, for now the wine is poured come, let us drink, for now the wine is poured. Jesus' blood poured let us drink together, Jesus' blood poured let us drink together.**
- 3. In Jesus' presence now we meet and rest. in Jesus' presence now we meet and rest. In the presence of our Lord we gather, in the presence of our Lord we gather.**
- 4. Rise, then, to spread abroad God's mighty word, rise, then, to spread abroad God's mighty word. Jesus risen will bring in the kingdom, Jesus risen will bring in the kingdom.**

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Post-communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Blessing

The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed ✝ bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn ELW #550 "*On What Has Now Been Sown*"

- 1. On what has now been sown your blessing Lord, bestow; the pow'r is yours alone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in grace the harvest raise, and yours alone shall be the praise!**

2. **To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; accept what is your own and pardon what is ours. Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive and to your word a blessing give.**
3. **Oh, grant that each of us, now met before you here, may meet together thus when you and yours appear, and follow you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, Amen! Lord Jesus, come!**

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Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the harvest.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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