

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Pentecost 6

Deacon Karen Davidson

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WORSHIP SERVICE

HYMN

250 **Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty**

1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; Come thou al - so un - to me;
3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed, Here thy seed is du - ly sown;
4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en, Let me keep thy gift di - vine;

Where my soul in joy - ful du - ty Waits for God who an - swers prayer.
Where we find thee and a - dore thee, There a heav'n on earth must be.
Let my soul, where it is plant - ed, Bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
How - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick - en, May thy Word still o'er me shine

Oh, how bless - ed is this place, Filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, Let it be thy tem - ple now!
So that all I hear may be Fruit - ful un - to life in me.
As my guid - ing star through life, As my com - fort in all strife.

L: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal.

C: Have mercy and hear us.

A CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Like summer seas washing softly upon the shore, like whispering winds heard upon the mountain slope, like a still small voice carrying across the meadow, like a child's hand reaching for our own - - gentle, unnoticed, and oft in vain...

C: So is your coming to us, O God.

L: Like ships seeking the sheltered harbor in the storm, like starving souls craving bread, like wanderers lost in the night, like prodigals - welcomed home, with arms outstretched and kisses for our shame...

C: So is our coming to you, O God.

L: So you have sought us, and so we seek you. You know us better than we know ourselves, the weaknesses we defend, the guilt we try to forget, the assets yet unused, the powers yet untested. You have called others like us...

C: Do you call us?

L: You have used others like us...

C: Can you use us? ... Almighty God, grant that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our Baptism into the death and resurrection of your son Christ, may be renewed in your Holy Spirit to live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

L: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

**C: 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.**

- L: Show us your mercy, O Lord,
C: **and grant us your salvation.**
L: Clothe your ministers with righteousness
C: **Let your people sing with joy.**
L: Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
C: **for only in you can we live in safety.**
L: Lord, keep this nation under your care,
C: **and guide us in the way of justice and truth.**
L: Let your way be known upon the earth;
C: **your saving health among all nations.**
L: Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
C: **nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**
L: Create in us clean hearts, O God,
C: **and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

- L: The Lord be with you.
C: **And also, with you.**
L: Let us pray, together.
C: **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

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:10-13

¹⁰As the rain the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. ¹²You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briars myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's

renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever.”

The word of the Lord.

Congregational response following the reading: Thanks be to God!

SECOND READING

Romans 8:1-11

There 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.

The word of the Lord.

Congregation response following the reading is: Thanks be to God!

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-9

That 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!”

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Congregation response following the Gospel is: **Glory to you, O Lord.***

SERMON – Deacon Karen (No Video)

What- Kind of Soil are You?

Back before broadcasting referred to radio and television, this parable described the way seeds are planted. Handfuls of seed were scattered -broadcast- across the field. For countless generations, this was the way that farmers planted their seed.

The people who gather around Jesus to hear the stories that he tells are familiar with this kind of broadcasting. They have seen it done, done it themselves. It's as familiar to them as the back of their hands.

It's all so familiar to the people listening to Jesus. Some seed falls on the path, the hard track that the farmer has walked time and again through the field. Some seed falls among the rocks, the rocks that are, so it seems, almost everywhere. Some seed falls where thorns will grow. They all know that this happens, that much of the seed goes to waste. Too bad. After all, that's life.

But some seed falls in good, rich soil and grows up tall and straight and yields an abundant harvest. They know that this happens too, but they don't know how, and they don't know why. It's a mystery! Yet they're glad, so glad, when the harvest comes. They give God thanks, and rejoice together; they're happy to have enough to eat.

But, what does it mean?

This question is very much the wrong question for us to ask about the story of the sower, or any of the stories told by Jesus. "What does it mean?" is the wrong question if we think that by having an answer, we can somehow get a handle on this story, domesticate it, make it safe. The stories Jesus tells are not subject to our control. He tells these stories so that we can be transformed. He tells these stories, not so that we can ask questions about them, but so that the stories can ask questions of us.

Today's story of broadcasting seed, with details so familiar to the crowd who come to hear Jesus, seems to me to ask us these three questions at least: What kind of soil are you? What kind of sower are you? What kind of seed do you scatter?

What kind of soil are you? Sometimes my mind is utterly conventional, restricted by training and habit. The crust of custom remains unbroken. I avoid the pain of a new idea, a new commitment. I forget nothing old, and learn nothing new. My fixation of

mind obstructs even the good will of God. I am a path made hard and bare by many feet, where the seed falls in vain, only to be picked up by bandit birds and carried off.

What kind of seed are you? Sometimes my mind is soft, shallow, sentimental. There's emotion, but not action. There's indulgence, but no obligation. My mind is eager, but unstable, and so nothing grows for long. The shallow soil of sentimentality and the hard rocks of cynicism conspire together to prevent roots from reaching out. The brilliant sunlight of reality burns away my fantasies, for there is no depth, no place to grow.

What kind of soil are you? Sometimes my mind is preoccupied, absorbed by the upheaval of the world, cluttered with its trash, incapable of observation, reflection, or even prayer. The hectic dance of activity, the endless tumult of events, leaves me without mental seriousness, the capacity to engage in sustained thought. The deepest, finest powers of my nature are injured. The growth that could be is choked off, strangled, by weeds. The conventional mind. The shallow, sentimental mind. The preoccupied mind. Mercifully there are times where I am none of these, but am instead a rich, fertile, welcoming soil that accepts the scattered seed and produces a crop-thirtyfold or sixty or a hundred.

When I am such soil, then my task is to be patient. Growth takes time. Too much digging about, too much interference with the prospering seed may delay or defeat the harvest. But at other times there's need for introspection. Then I may well ask myself.

How can I be more than a hard-beaten path?

What are the stones in my soul that prevent me from having depth?

Where are the weeds in my life that threaten to choke whatever grows?

What kind of soil are you? Sometimes I am rich soil that brings forth bountiful grain. When this happens, then my attention can move from the soil to the seed.

That seed which sprouts may come to me through the glory of the rising sun, the splatter of waves upon the shore, or the multitude and silence of the stars.

That seed which sprouts may come to me through some other human life, a person whose true example warms my heart and quickens my will, whose patience and good humor make me capable of the same.

That seed which sprouts may come to me through the community of faith as I respond to scripture and sacrament, participate in living tradition, and welcome the ministry that other Christians offer to me.

That seed which sprouts comes to me always through the mercy and action of God, but most readily when I open myself to God's perfect gift of himself in Christ.

And when that seed sprouts, then I can become aware of how that seed continues to be broadcast even at times when I am not a soil where it can prosper.

Do not hear the stories of Jesus in simply one way! He tells them in order to get conversation started. Today's story asks us, "What kind of soil are you?" It also asks,

"What kind of sower?"

What kind of sower are you? Not only are God's actions seeds that are scattered, but our actions done in the name of God are also scattered seeds. Each of us is meant to walk the fields of life broadcasting seed, doing actions great and small, but doing them in the name of God, with the divine harvest in mind.

It matters not whether what you do is something great in the eyes of the world, for any human deed is a frail thing. What matters is whether your action is a seed, something that, if it lands in welcoming soil, can yield a rich harvest. Realize this – whether you put a band-aid on a child's skinned knee or endow a college, whether you take soup to a sick neighbor or establish a food bank, just as some of our members did right here on this property so many years ago ... you are doing what we all must do – move through the days of our life, and broadcast the seed of God's purpose, seed that will take root in hospitable soil and yield a rich harvest – of kindness, of justice, of new opportunity – a harvest beyond our imagining. Amen.

Pastor Jim's Comments (A Video On Staying Healthy...with a brief interruption)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj3NII7rieE>

[Sermon for 7/10/2020 - Staying Healthy](#)

HYMN

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Phil. 4:6

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are as follows:

1. What a Friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
2. Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
3. Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?

What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged: take it to the Lord in prayer!
Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge—take it to the Lord in prayer!

O what peace we of - ten for - feit, O what need - less pain we bear,
Can we find a friend so faith - ful, who will all our sor - rows share?
Do thy friends de - spise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer.
Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness—take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a' so - lace there.

Joseph Scriven, ca. 1855

ACT OF RECONCILIATION

L: Dear members of God's family and of one another, let us come together honestly to tell God that we have not lived as we could and ask him to forgive us.

C: Our Father, we have not fulfilled the hope in which you created us. We repent and ask your mercy that our sin might be forgiven and our guilt removed. Help us to learn

from scripture and from one another your will for our lives, so that, with your help we can claim the inheritance of unlimited freedom which you have willed to us through your Son. You came to our world in Jesus. Come now to us.

L: God our Father does care about us. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to us. For us Jesus gave his life. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creature. Old things have passed away. All things are new. All things are of God who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. Let us be reconciled with one another in word and deed. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

L: In the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

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;
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.**

COMMUNION

POST COMMUNION

THANK THE LORD and sing his praise; tell everyone what he has done. Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name. He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia. Alleluia.

PRAYERS

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food.

We thank you Father, through Jesus Christ your dear son, that you have graciously protected us. By your great mercy defend us from all peril and danger. Into your hands we commend our bodies and our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us.

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL HYMN

On What Has Now Been Sown

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The key signature is one flat (F major/D minor) and the time signature is common time (C). Handwritten annotations above the vocal line indicate chords: Am, F, G, D, G, F, G, Am, F, G, C.

1 On what has now been sown your bless-ing Lord, be - stow; the
2 To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; ac -
3 Oh, grant that each of us, now met be - fore you here, may

pow'r is yours a - lone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in
cept what is your own and par-don what is ours. Our prais - es,
meet to - geth - er thus when you and yours ap - pear, and fol - low

grace the har - vest raise, and yours a - lone shall be the praise!
Lord, and pray'ns re - ceive and to your word a bless - ing give.
you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, A - men! Lord Je - sus, come!

OFFERING PLATE IN NARTHEX

PSALM 19:14

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH FOR:

Jim Berggren

Pat Bethea

Harold Braun

Verlene Furley

Fred Gardner

Nanette Luker

Mark Martinez

Susa Neitzel

Larry Polzin

Callie Schaper Hoffman

Billy Sosa

Uzo Uzo

Julie Yanta

Fredda Yurk

and victims of CoVid-19