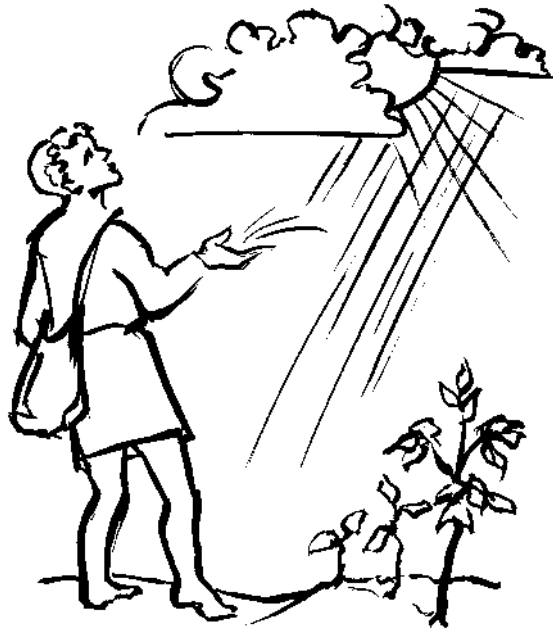


*6th Sunday After Pentecost*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*  
*July 12, 2020*



1812 North Highland Avenue  
Clearwater, Florida 33755  
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026  
[office@GraceCLW.com](mailto:office@GraceCLW.com)  
Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com)

## **ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD**

### **GREETING**

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Worship Leader: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **FIRST READING**

**Isaiah 55:10-13**

Introduction to the Lesson: *God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.*

Reader: "My word is like the snow and the rain  
that come down from the sky to water the earth.

They make the crops grow  
and provide seed for planting and food to eat.

11 So also will be the word that I speak—  
it will not fail to do what I plan for it;

12 "You will leave Babylon with joy;  
you will be led out of the city in peace.

The mountains and hills will burst into singing,  
and the trees will shout for joy.

13 Cypress trees will grow where now there are briars;  
myrtle trees will come up in place of thorns.

This will be a sign that will last forever,  
a reminder of what I, the Lord, have done."

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

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

Introduction to the Gospel: *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.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 13th chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: That same day Jesus left the house and went to the lakeside, where he sat down to teach. 2 The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it, while the crowd stood on the shore. 3 He used parables to tell them many things.

"Once there was a man who went out to sow grain. 4 As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some of it fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted, because the soil wasn't deep. 6 But when the sun came up, it burned the young plants; and because the roots had not grown deep enough, the plants soon dried up. 7 Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 But some seeds fell in good soil, and the plants bore grain: some had one hundred grains, others sixty, and others thirty."

9 And Jesus concluded, "Listen, then, if you have ears!"

18 "Listen, then, and learn what the parable of the sower means. 19 Those who hear the message about the Kingdom but do not understand it are like the seeds that fell along the path. The Evil One comes and snatches away what was sown in them. 20 The seeds that fell on rocky ground stand for those who receive the message gladly as soon as they hear it. 21 But it does not sink deep into them, and they don't last long. So when trouble or persecution comes because of the message, they give up at once. 22 The seeds that fell among thorn bushes stand for those who hear the message; but the worries about this life and the love for riches choke the message, and they don't bear fruit. 23 And the seeds sown in the good soil stand for those who hear the message and understand it: they bear fruit, some as much as one hundred, others sixty, and others thirty."

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

### Taking Root

Jesus makes it clear that merely speaking or receiving the good news of the kingdom of God is not always sufficient. Through preaching, Bible study, and worship God's word is planted in our hearts. But many things can get in the way of the word taking root, growing, and producing fruit.

The church is often tempted to do whatever it takes to bring in as many people, and as quickly, as possible for the sake of increasing numbers. This is sometimes done through shallowness: appealing to popular trends, preaching an easy message that requires no repentance or sacrifice, or depending on the charisma of the messenger more than the substance of the message.

In his parable of the sowing of seeds, Jesus emphasizes that it takes understanding and depth for God's word to take root, to endure struggles, and to be sustained long enough to bear fruit. Shallowness only makes room for a quick growth that doesn't last.

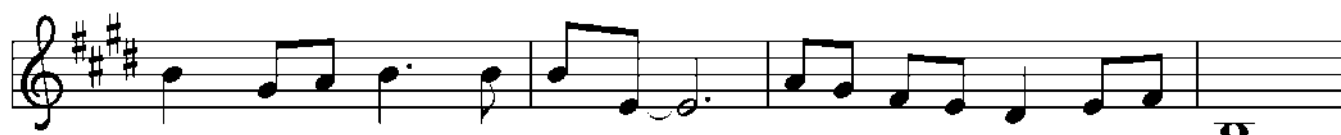
In the church, what makes for depth that allows God's word to take root and last in our lives? Often it means connecting God's word to the deep, personal needs we bring. Is the Bible a book about things that happened a long time ago, or does it speak God's word for our lives today? Do we listen only to the parts of God's word that sound easy and make us feel good, or do we wrestle with messages of repentance and calls to seek justice?

Martin Luther taught the church that God's word comes to us as law and gospel. We don't get to choose which one we want to hear. We always get both. Both knowing we need God's mercy and hearing that God's mercy is a gift for us through Christ bring God's word deep into our hearts, where it takes root and lives. This is what it means to understand God's word with depth.

### SERMON

#### HYMN OF THE DAY

#### *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.



Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950

Music: GOOD SOIL, Handt Hanson

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: Gracious God, your word has been sown in many ways and places. We pray for missionaries and newly planted congregations around the world. Inspire us by their witness to the faith we share. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Creating God, the mountains and hills burst into song and the trees and fields clap their hands in praise. We pray for the birds and animals who make their home in the trees, and for lands stripped bare by deforestation. Empower us to sustainably use what you have given. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Abiding God, care for all who are in need (*especially* Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vici Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, the family and friends of the over 120,000 people in the United States & the 350,000 people worldwide who have died from COVID-19 including Anka Pink's grandmother, and

those suffering from natural disasters (including COVID-19 and the flooding across the United States), violence, & terror.

For those who are doubting, renew faith. For those who are worrying, provide release. For those who are struggling, ease burdens. For those in fear, give hope . Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.*

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **LORD’S PRAYER**

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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.**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast;

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

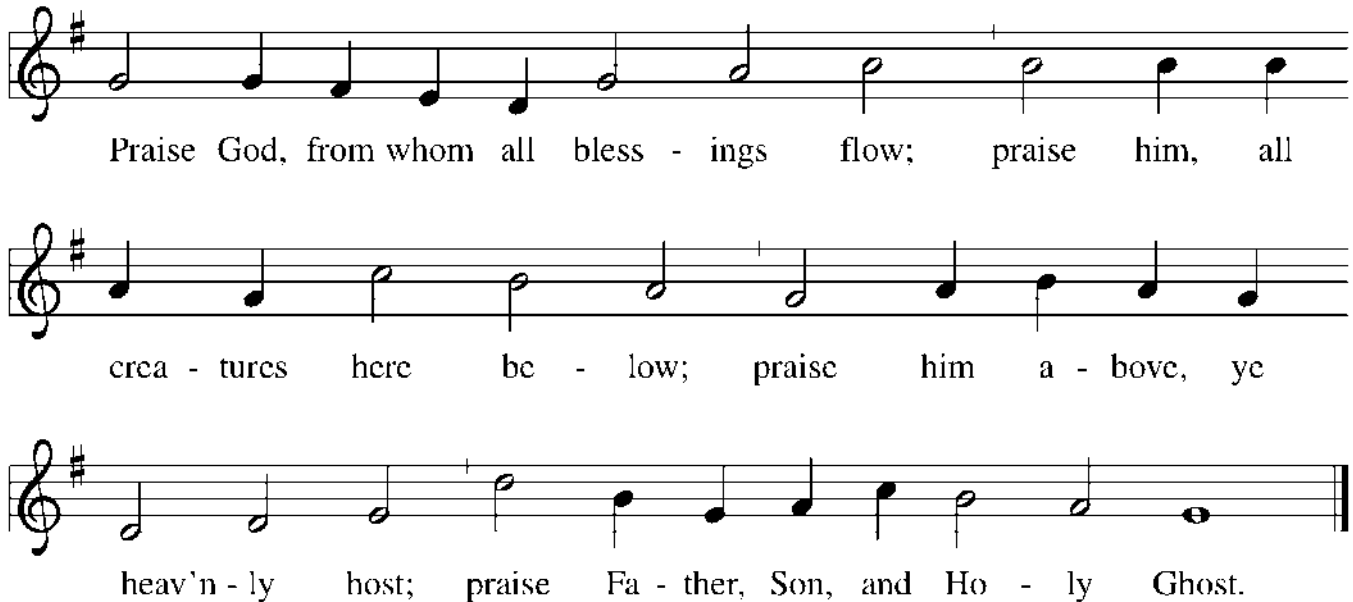
## BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *Doxology*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

## DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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