

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH - Saskatoon

Pentecost 6 – July 12, 2020

Order of Service

Welcome

Brief Order of Confession and Forgiveness

Gathering Song: **“Here I Am to Worship”**

“He who has ears,
let him hear.”



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.**

First Lesson: Genesis 25:19-34 These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, “If it is to be this way, why do I live?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger.” When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!” (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For 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, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For 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. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For 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, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But 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. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If 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 Gospel Acclamation: **“Word of God Come Down to Earth”**

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were

scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!" "Hear then the parable of the sower. When 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. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet 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. As 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. But 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."

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: **"In Christ Alone"**

Apostles' Creed

Prayers of Intercession and the Lord's Prayer

Benediction and Blessing

Sending Song: **"Sent Forth With God's Blessing"**

"Here I Am to Worship"

Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes, let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore You
Hope of a life spent with You

CHORUS:

Here I am to worship Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that You're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days, Oh so highly exalted
Glorious in Heaven above
Humbly You came to the earth You created
All for love's sake became poor CHORUS

I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin up-on that cross (x2) CHORUS

"Word of God Come Down on Earth"

Word of God, come down on earth
Living rain from heav'n descending
Touch our hearts and bring to birth
Faith and hope and love unending
Word almighty we revere you
Word made flesh we long to hear you.

Word that speaks God's tender love
One with God beyond all telling
Word that send us from above
God the Spirit with us dwelling
Word of truth, to all truth lead us
Word of life with one bread feed us

"In Christ Alone"

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;

Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand
“Sent Forth With God’s Blessing”
Sent forth by God’s blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from
His dwelling take leave.
The Supper is ended, O now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of His teaching
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
His grace did invite us, his love shall unite us
to work for God’s kingdom and answer His call.

With praise and thanksgiving
to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev’ryday life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing His children of each tribe and race.
With Your feast You feed us,
With Your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and His name that we bear.

A devotion from Pastor Mark....

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray the blessings of our ever-present Lord rest upon you and pray that you are staying safe and staying healthy as we move through the summer months and work through continuing movements of re-opening in our province.

We’re well into gardening season now, aren’t we? I have to admit that I’m not much of a gardener but I’ve seen a few in my time. And I have some notion as to what is required in producing a garden. There’s quite a bit of work that goes into it. Maybe that’s why I’m not much into gardening! You have to till the soil before planting. You have to be aware of what kind of soil you have so that you can know what kind of plants will grow there. And you have to decide what you are going to plant as that will influence what you do to the soil before and after you plant.

In the Gospel for Sunday, July 12 (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23) we hear Jesus tell a parable that seems to present something of this sort – soil. Or, more specifically, types of soil. The sower in the story casts the seed and Jesus relates how the seed fared in each type of soil. The disciples didn’t quite get the point of the story. Maybe that’s because a bunch of them were fishermen! But Jesus goes on to offer an explanation – we are the soil, the seed is the “word of the kingdom”.

There is so much that can be said about this parable but for this devotion I offer the question, “What kind of soil are we?” We all react differently to the Good News. And each of us have some of the characteristics of the soil in the parable.

The first soil mentioned is that “on the path”. It is flat and hard. Packed down by all the traffic. All the seed can do is lie exposed on top of the soil. It’s not surprising that hungry birds come and scoop it up before it can sprout.

There may be times when our hearts and minds are hardened like the soil on the path. Hardened by things like words that wound, unforgiveness (ours or others), prejudice against others “not like us”. Or pride, making us think that there is nothing new for us to learn about God’s relationship to us and to the world. When our hearts are hardened, the Good News of Jesus Christ doesn’t have the opportunity to grow.

Next is the rocky ground with its shallow soil. Faith which springs up quick but fades or dies quickly as well. There’s a story about a town in which the churches regularly had revival meetings with fiery or inspiring preachers who would conclude the day with an altar call – exhorting hearers to come down and commit their life to faith and relationship with God. Every time these meetings were held there was a man from the town who would get all worked up

throughout and would ultimately come running down the aisle for the altar call shouting “Fill me, Lord! Fill me up!”

But the next day he would be back to old ways and patterns – taking advantage of others in his business, spreading rumors about neighbors, lying and creating friction between others. This continued through the summer at the numerous revivals that were held. Until, after several of them, when he came running calling out, “Fill me, Lord!” a person near the back called out, “Don’t do it, Lord – he leaks!”

In truth, we all leak. We have times and moments when we know and are enflamed by the closeness of God – the strength, the purpose, the hope, the joy – but we “put faith on the shelf” when it seems like following Christ and his way will be hard or call us to be changed in thought, word and deed and the fire of the Spirit may dwindle to embers.

The third soil is filled with thorns. Here, it is not so much the soil that affects the growth as it is the thorns that choke it. There are so many things that hold a strong allure and can threaten to choke off faith. The desire for comfort in finances as our security or pursuit of leisure to the diminishment of attending to word, worship, service or giving. The very things that our culture so often trumpets as ultimate goods are things that our Lord cautions us about – they can supplant our trust in him as we trust in things instead.

Which brings us to the good soil – soil which has been prepared, where seed can take root and bear fruit.

A man went to visit an artist friend dying of cancer who had only days to live. Several paintings were in his room with abstract imagery and symbols. The man said, “Tell me what they mean.” And the artist replied, “No. If I tell you, then that is all you will ever see there.”

It seemed brusque or ungenerous to not simply offer a simple answer or explanation but the friend came to see that it was encouragement to look at art, literature, ideas, people in an open and receptive way. That there can always be something new, surprising, challenging and growth-inducing when we ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts hungry to receive.

At times we have probably all been one of these soils. We have been hardened or we have been open. We have been fired up with enthusiasm only to have it die down. Or we have let the thorns of neglect, busyness or distraction choke our faith.

It is Good News for us and for the world that the quality of the soil does not affect the potential of the seed. God the Gardener continues to broadcast grace, love, redemption and reconciliation on all the soils found in creation. The Holy Spirit can and does prepare hearts and lives so that the seed can sprout, grow and bear fruit. Christ our Lord waters and tends the garden of our faith so that we can be drawn more and more to him – like sunflowers turning toward the sun throughout the day as it traces its journey across the sky.

May the seed of God’s word fall on good soil for you this day – finding fertile ground in your life that you are blessed in your walk with Christ, and share in abundance with all that God has made!

Yours in Christ

Pastor Mark

Prayers of the Church

Lord God, we ask that you would guide us by your Word and by your Spirit, so that we may see more clearly the way to follow you. You invite us to be generous with our time, talents and resources so that the seed of your Gospel may spread in the world and bear fruit in each life it touches. Let us give joyfully and generously, sowing seeds of the kingdom. Lord, in your mercy...

Loving God, you formed the earth to be a place of joy and abundance for all your creatures. We give you thanks for food in all its variety and for the people who grow it, transport it and market it. The days of pandemic have shown us how much we depend on others. We pray for those who do not have enough food, for those at risk due to extreme weather, uncertain prices and social upheaval. Help us care for the earth and for each other in our common need of its fruits. Lord, in your mercy...

Gracious God, your loving word has been sown extravagantly in our hearts and we give you praise. Thank you for how it lies within us – waiting for the right moment or condition to sprout, to grow and to burst forth into bloom. We thank you for how, even when the ground seems to others not to be good, you continue to sow. And thank you for how you cause the yield to be bountiful. We pray, Lord, that you would help us to be willing – willing to let you have your way, willing to grow, willing to produce further seed and to sow it in the lives of others. Lord, in your mercy...

Holy Spirit – wind of God and Divine Comforter, you are strength of the strong and solace of the needy. We call upon you together in the name of the Father and of the Son for our concerns and the concern of many. Be present for those we lift before you – for those who hunger in body or spirit, for those in grief or loss, fear or doubt, those longing for direction or aid. Receive the cares and concerns, the joys and blessings and all those people and situations that we offer before you in prayer (PAUSE to make petitions of your heart) Lord, in your mercy...

Lord Jesus, we praise you for being such a powerful seed. You grow and produce such abundant fruit among those who not only receive you with joy but who in faithfulness continue to listen to you once you have taken root in hearts. Thank you for bearing our burdens and for offering to be yoked with us. Teach us to sow your love and goodness, your peace and reconciliation and every good gift that you bear and spread along your way. Help us to heave the ears to hear and the will to do all that you would have of us.

All these things, and whatever else you know that we need, we raise in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – who taught us to pray... *(you are invited to continue with the Lord's prayer in whichever version you are comfortable)*