



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday, July 12, 2020

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Gracious Growth, Bountiful Harvest

As We Gather

Plants in God's good earth respond to the showers He sends, producing plants for pasture and crops for harvest. In the psalm, David says it is as if "the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy." It is all natural, and so is our producing fruit for God as His Word works through us. That God works through us sinners is all grace; if we but hear the Word and let the Spirit give us understanding, a bountiful harvest will follow. Jesus likens it to seeds producing yields of up to a hundredfold. But we are no mere plants, as Paul points out in the Epistle. Because we have been adopted by our heavenly Father, we are brothers and sisters of Christ, the children of God, calling out to Him, "Abba! Father!" Our growth in faith is indeed by the grace of God, and to Him belongs all the credit for the bountiful harvest He reaps through us.

Prelude and Welcome

Ringing of the Tower Bell

871 Greet the Rising Sun

1 Greet the rising sun,
Shining with bright force,
Like an athlete strong,
Set to run the course;
Birds soar high above,
Wildflow'rs bloom below;
With the day's new light,
Glad to work I go.

2 Father, hear my prayer,
Keep me safe today;
Sanctify my thoughts,
All I do and say:
As I teach the young
And esteem the old,
May Your bounteous grace
By my life be told.

3 Lord, I will today
On Your love rely;
Let no evil thought
Cloud the clear blue sky.
Joyful and content
With life's simpler things,
Knowing all I need
From Your kindness springs.

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Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Confession and Absolution *Isaiah 55:11–12; Psalm 32:5; 124:8; Matthew 13:23; 1*

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

P In the today's Epistle, Paul reminds us that "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Let us therefore go to our gracious heavenly Father, confessing our sins.

*Silence for reflection on God's Word
and for self-examination.*

P In the Old Testament Reading, God promises, "My word . . . shall not return to Me empty; it shall accomplish . . . and shall succeed."

C But we do not trust You in all things. We have sinned in thought, word, and deed. Forgive us, heavenly Father.

P Then God tells us, "You shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace."

C But we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. Hear us, free us, and lead us in paths pleasing to You, heavenly Father.

P In the Gospel, our Lord explains that “the one who hears the word and understands it . . . bears fruit.” By the grace of God, we believe and understand that Jesus, the Word of God in the flesh, succeeded in destroying death and rising victorious for us. For His sake, God forgives us and uses us to bear fruit for Him. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. May the Word planted inside you produce a great harvest for our gracious Lord.

C **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

584 Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing

1 Faith and truth and life bestowing,
Open now the Scriptures, Lord,
Seed to life eternal sowing,
Scattered on the wind abroad.
Let not hearts, Your Word receiving,
Like a barren field be found,
Choked with thorns and unbelieving,
Shallow earth or stony ground.

2 May the Spirit’s pow’r unceasing
Bring to life the hidden grain,
Daily in our hearts increasing,
Bearing fruit that shall remain.
So in Scripture, song, and story,
Savior, may Your voice be heard.
Till our eyes behold Your glory
Give us ears to hear Your Word.

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Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

C **Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

¹⁰“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
¹²“For you shall go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
¹³Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall make a name for the LORD,
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 65; antiphon: v. 5

P Praise is due to You, O God, in Zion, and to You shall vows be performed.

C **O You who hear prayer, to You shall all flesh come.**

P You visit the earth and water it; You greatly enrich it;

C **the river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for so You have prepared it.**

P You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges,

C **softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.**

P You crown the year with Your bounty;

C **Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.**

P The pastures of the wilderness overflow,

C **the hills gird themselves with joy,**

P the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,

the valleys deck themselves with grain,

C **they shout and sing together for joy.**

Epistle

Romans 8:12–17

¹²So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.
²And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, 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 produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear. . . .

¹⁸“Hear 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 has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along 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 he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he 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 deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

577 Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast

1 Almighty God, Your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound.

2 Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love.

- 3 Let not the world's deceitful cares
 The rising plant destroy,
 But let it yield a hundredfold
 The fruits of peace and joy.
- 4 So when the precious seed is sown,
 Life-giving grace bestow
 That all whose souls the truth receive
 Its saving pow'r may know.

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Sermon

Catechism

Explanation of the Third Article

☐ I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

545 Word of God, Come Down on Earth

- 1 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.
- 2 Word eternal, throned on high,
 Word that brought to life creation,
 Word that came from heav'n to die,
 Crucified for our salvation,
 Saving Word, the world restoring,
 Speak to us, Your love outpouring.
- 3 Word that caused blind eyes to see,
 Speak and heal our mortal blindness;
 Deaf we are: our healer be;
 Loose our tongues to tell Your kindness.
 Be our Word in pity spoken,
 Heal the world, by sin now broken.

- 4 Word that speaks God's tender love,
One with God beyond all telling,
Word that sends 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.

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Offering Prayer

Prayer of the Church

- P** We use today's psalm as we pray for the Church around the world and all people in their various circumstance.

Lord's Prayer

- G** **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

- P** *Let us pray.* We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through Your life-giving, life-sustaining Word. We pray that even as the rain comes down and does not return without watering the earth, so too Your Word would accomplish its purpose, making us wise unto salvation through Christ our Savior and nurturing in us the new life of the Spirit; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- G** **Amen.**

Benediction

- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- G** **Amen.**

Dismissal

- P** Go in peace as you serve the Lord.
- G** **Thanks be to God!**

921 On What Has Now Been Sown

- 1 On what has now been sown
Thy blessing, Lord, bestow;
The pow'r is Thine alone
To make it sprout and grow.
Do Thou in grace the harvest raise,
And Thou alone shalt have the praise!
- 2 To Thee our wants are known,
From Thee are all our pow'rs;
Accept what is Thine own
And pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive,
And to Thy Word a blessing give.
- 3 O grant that each of us,
Now met before Thee here,
May meet together thus
When Thou and Thine appear
And follow Thee to heav'n, our home.
E'en so, amen, Lord Jesus, come!

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✠ Soli Deo Gloria ✠

To God Alone Be Glory

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