



Summer

OUR SAVIOR
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 12, 2020



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
745 Front Street S., Issaquah, WA 98027
425-392-4169

SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

CALL TO WORSHIP *Morning Has Broken* — Gaelic tune Jonathan Shue, Scott Hafso

WELCOME Pastor Jim Kruse

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. Almighty God,

C: 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

WORD: GOD SPEAKS TO US IN SCRIPTURE READING, PREACHING AND SONG.

FIRST READING

Romans 8: 1-11

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.

AM: Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

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!"

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 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."

PM: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

So Much for the Soil

Pastor Jim Kruse

The Gospel that I just read gives two perspectives on a parable that Jesus told during his ministry of teaching about how God is present in the world. The first perspective, the story itself, Jesus told to a large crowd that had gathered around him along the beach of the Sea of Galilee. Here, there is no special explanation, no clues, no insights into what the story means. Jesus simply tells the story, then finishes by saying, "Put your ears on. If you are really listening, you will get it."

But then, later, Jesus offers a private allegorical explanation to his disciples. Those who have selected the readings for this Sunday have taken the two approaches to the story, cut out all that happened in the middle, and put them together for us to hear all at the same time.

I am going to suggest that the two versions of the story are told to two different groups of people and have two different points to make. I am going to start with the second telling, the disciples' private little session with Jesus. And then I will come back to the original telling later.

Way back in November, if you can remember back that far, I showed you this picture of a small rural church in Wisconsin where I served as pastor nearly nearly 30 years ago. I moved into the parsonage that had been built across the parking lot from the church building in the depth of winter, January, 1992. The church and the house stood alone in the middle of the five acres of land that the congregation owned, none of which had seen the light of day for many months as it was lying underneath a thick blanket of winter snow.

And so I was curious one Thursday afternoon, late in March, when I looked out the kitchen window and saw Leroy Tobalt, one of the members of the congregation who had been on the call committee, drive his tractor across the parking lot with a full load of manure in a spreader attached to the back. I watched as he drove right to the end of the parking lot and then off into the snow next to the house. He took three quick passes back and forth across the snow, dumping the contents of the spreader in a neat little rectangle about 30 feet wide and about 50 feet long. Then he turned back into the parking lot, back out to the road, and was gone as quickly as he came.

When the April rains came about a month later, and the snow all melted, I found out that Leroy had dropped his load perfectly on top of my summer garden. Leroy had been fertilizing that garden with cow manure for as long as he could remember. And he just assumed that I would know exactly what he was doing.

Over the three years that I was with that congregation, I learned everything I have ever learned about vegetable gardens. But none of what I learned would have done me any good if Leroy had not brought around a load of manure in March to prepare the soil for planting in June. If you've got good soil, you've got a good start. If you haven't got good soil, you haven't got a chance. It is all about the soil.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells a parable about someone who wants to grow some good healthy plants. And so he goes out to scatters some seeds on all types of ground. Some of the ground has been trampled down by foot traffic. Some of the ground is covered with rocks. Some is already full of bigger, stronger, more tenacious weed plants than the seeds that were being planted. And a small amount of the seeds find good soil where grew up good, and strong, and healthy.

Over the years, like most people, when we hear this story, we only hear what the disciples heard in private, we only hear the allegorical version. And with our human ears on, we hear this story as a challenge to become good soil for the seeds that God is planting in our lives. We want to be rich fertile ground for the recipients of God's good gifts. So we start to think about all the ways we can improve. We attend Bible Studies and other classes, or maybe we decide to pay attention better during worship. We commit ourselves to pray more often and with more intensity, for God to protect us from the bad things that threaten us and the life we are making. And we decide to discipline ourselves, to say no to the world's competing voices, luring us into places that are unhealthy or destructive. "Improve the soil." That is what we hear. "Get a load full of manure and start working it in." This makes sense to us.

But most likely, the first century farmer who heard Jesus' story about a man who goes around throwing good seed on a dountrodden path, and among the rocks, and among thorny weeds, would have been shocked. These hearers would have walked away scratching their heads. Why would anyone be so wasteful with good seed? Without the benefit of a private explanation, the soil becomes only a small part of this story. The sower does not really seem to care where the seed lands. And the warning that Jesus gives, both at the beginning and the end of his telling, is not, "Go and be good soil." No, Jesus simply says, "LISTEN!" "Put your ears on, if you are really listening, you will get it."

The warning to LISTEN, is a reminder that parables are not as easy to understand as we may think and may not have easy, allegorical explanations. Perhaps the story that Jesus tells is not really about the soil. But it is about this crazy farmer goes throwing his precious seeds, willy-nilly, all over the place. Perhaps Jesus is saying that we are knee deep in the presence of God, who is continually and constantly pouring out good things for us and all creation, whether we know or not. We just have to open our eyes and see. We just have to put our ears on and listen. There is solid scriptural evidence that this is Jesus deeper message.

A new, even more faithful, listening of the Gospel for today is to hear the descriptions of four kind of soil as just that, descriptions, and not prescriptions for us to go after. Jesus is describing the reality of our world, both the outside world and the world of our hearts. We are, at the same time and in all ways, all kinds of people, all kinds of soil. We are, at the same time and in all ways, people who do not understand, people who do not quite get it. Good soil is hard to come by, and God knows it. God knows that we don't get it. And God also knows that we are afraid of the things that can hurt us. And God also knows that there are things in everyday life that are big and flashy, and capture our hearts. And God also knows that we each carry within us a deep and abiding ability to be blessed and become a blessing to others.

The clarity of this message comes, not in the words themselves, but in the life of the one who tells it. Jesus, the Christ of God, enters into the reality it describes and lives into each of its consequences. Jesus teaches the people about the love of God, but is ultimately trampled under the feet of those whose job it was to hold the scriptures sacred. Jesus walks innocently into the evil intentions of the world trusting that God will keep him safe, only to be arrested and tortured by them. Jesus dies the death of all who are choked out by bigger, stronger, more tenacious powers of illness, disasters, and foolishness. And in all of that, Jesus lets the God who brought him into this world, come to life where he can, in the simple words and actions of compassion, service, and care for others.

As April turned to May, and May to June, I started to get a lot of questions from the members of my new congregation. "What'ja gonna plant? When'ya gonna plant 'em?" I got a lot of advice on how to do things. And I learned a lot about how things grow.

I learned, for instance, that if you plant 30 tomato plants in June, all the tables and counter surfaces in your house will be covered with ripening tomatoes by the middle of September. I learned that one zucchini plant is more than anyone ever really needs to plant—five is way too many. I learned that it is easier if you weed a little every day than if you try to do the weeding once a month. And I learned that the all the deer and rabbits and ground hogs and snails think that you have planted your garden just for them, and not for your own consumption.

A second gracious surprise is hidden in this parable. Even those few seeds that finally take root do not all produce the same amount of return. We are not judged by the amount of God's blessings we are able to recognize and pass along. We are only asked to be open. Listen as your ears allow. And let God come to life as God is able. "In some cases, a hundred-fold, in others sixty, and in others thirty."

But in all cases, it is all good.

HYMN OF THE DAY *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil* — Text & Music: Handt Hanson, b. 1950

Lord, let my heart be good soil, open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is understood.
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.
Lord, let my heart be good soil.

OFFERING

Please take a moment to give thanks to God for all that you have received in life, and remember your generous financial support of the ongoing ministry obligations of OSLC.

OFFERING PRAYER

PM: God of mercy and grace,
the eyes of all wait upon you,
and you open your hand in blessing.
Fill us with all good things,
that we may come to the help of all in need,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen

OFFERING SONG

The Gifts Are Many

Text: Andrew Donaldson, b. 1951; Music: English traditional

The gifts are many, the Body one, and into one are all baptized.
Beloved, share one heart, one mind, one hope, one faith, one love in Christ.

APOSTLES' 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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Adapted from the NW Washington Synod "Weekly Prayer Message"...

God of life and breath, you are our source of hope.

+ We give thanks for your precious gifts of love and life; embrace and nurture us in your love; sustain us when we are feeling broken or frightened; open our hearts and minds to hear your word and call; strengthen us to take action to seek justice for our neighbors; grant us courage and creativity to joyfully share your Good News.

We give thanks for your creation.

+ Enable us to be educated, equipped, and inspired to be better stewards of your world. We give thanks for our partners at Earth Ministry and Lutherans Restoring Creation.

We pray for our world, nation, and local communities.

+ We lift up people for whom insecurity, violence, and fear are the norm. Help us to bring healing, wholeness, and safety to all.

+ God of Mercy, guide us to recognize our prejudices and empower us take action to eliminate the racism that permeates our communities and our church. O God, open our eyes, our ears, and our minds. Help us to behold one another as you behold us. Help us to be more firmly rooted in the practices of the gospel—so that the way we live will make real the dream of your beloved community within and among us.

+ We pray for all in the wake of natural disasters, including recent cyclones and tropical storms. Grant strength to those affected as they recover and rebuild.

+ We lift up all in our community who provide emergency services: medical workers, firefighters, and police. Grant them wisdom and safety.

We pray for all who are in need of healing and strength:

+ We pray for those who are facing ongoing challenges and health concerns: Henrik & Patty, Vern, communities across the country, Mike, Pattie, Paul, Lyle, Bodil, Perrin, Marilyn, Dave, Emily, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie.

+ We continue to pray for those affected by the COVID-19 crisis: bring peace and comfort to the families of those who have died; grant healing for those diagnosed; protect and sustain medical workers, care providers, first responders and chaplains; guide those working to improve testing and those working toward a vaccine; sustain those who are facing financial uncertainty; and help us to be wise as we emerge from our stay at home order.

+ Loving God, you call us to care for our neighbors. Inspire our leaders and guide us to be better advocates for the sake of each member in our community - especially those who have little power and no voice.

+ We pray for our neighbors who are fearful or in danger in their relationships. We lift up the work of those who protect, support, and advocate for people who are experiencing domestic violence.

+ We lift up those experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Empower us to reach out to those who need care and support. For those who are in despair, remember you are loved. You are never beyond God's mercy, grace and love.

We pray for those who are grieving:

+ Loving God, wrap your arms of love and hope around all who are experiencing any kind of loss, disconnection, or brokenness. We lift up the family and friends of Sheila, Dick, Germaine, Bob, Fran, Joe and Don.

We pray for your church:

+ We give thanks for the leaders and members of ministries of our congregation. Grant them energy and creativity for their work; give them grace to rest and find peace.

+ We pray for the residents, staff, and families of nursing homes and care facilities, including those ministries that are part of our synod: Josephine Caring Community, Foss Home, Columbia Lutheran Home, Norse Home, Bethany of the Northwest, and Hearthstone Community.

+ We pray for congregations in the call process. Grant them wisdom and patience as they discern where it is that you are leading them. We lift up transition teams, call committees, transition pastors, congregation staff and lay leaders, and synod staff.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

+ Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Trusting in your mercy and grace, we lift our prayers to you.

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

BLESSING

PM: May God the sower,
make you good and fertile soil.
May Christ the seed
bloom and grow in your words and actions.
May the fruitful Spirit
bring forth a bountiful yield in your lives.
God the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit
bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

SENDING SONG

You Are Mine — Text & Music: David Haas, b. 1957

Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you each by name.
Come and follow me, I will bring you home; I love you, and you are mine.

POSTLUDE

Now — Charles W. Ore

Jiyoung Lee

Commemorations for the Week

Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1931, Sunday, July 12

A winner of the Nobel Prize for peace for his efforts to unite peoples after the First World War, Söderblom also called attention to the revival of early church worship principles, and helped to lay the groundwork for the World Council of Churches.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, died 1566, Friday, July 17

A native of Spain, Las Casas first came to the Western hemisphere while serving in the military. Granted a large estate with indigenous slaves, he freed them after he was ordained a priest. He worked in the Caribbean and Central America to improve the lives of the native peoples.

Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader: Pastor Jim Kruse
Assisting Minister: Sue Johnson
Song Leaders: Lori Downey, Alice Lewis, Leslie Waltzer,
David Hersey, Marc Montague
Mandolin/Guitar: Jonathan Shue
Videographer: Elizabeth Waltzer
Banner: Elaine Stamm
Flowers provided by: Dianne Tanner
Bulletin Cover: Craig Gillin

Readings for Next Sunday: Romans 8: 12-25; Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

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Our Savior Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. James R. Kruse, *Transition Pastor*
Shari Lundberg, *Parish Administrator*
Dr. Jiyoun Lee, *Parish Organist*

Scott Hafso, *Director of Worship & Music*
Kate Gagnon, *Lay Visitation Minister*



Flowers grown and arranged by Dianne Tanner.
Thank you, Dianne!

Additional worship resources:

Readings: Psalm 65: 1-13; Isaiah 55: 10-13

Suggested Hymn for Listening: *On What Has Now Been Sown*

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807; Music: John Darwall, 1731-1789

Prayer is putting our faith into action. We invite you to include these people in your daily prayers. You can make prayer requests via email at office@oslcssaquah.org. All written requests will remain on this list for 4 weeks.

Henrik & Patty Christopherson comfort and support after experiencing a house fire. (Dianne Tanner)

Vern Lindquist peace and healing.

Safety and peace for communities being torn apart during these difficult times. (Karen Hansen)

Mike Golick peace of mind as he adjusts to his new assisted living facility in Anchorage, Alaska. (brother-in-law to Patty Gerde)

Mike special ops military unexpectedly called up. (nephew of Dave and Marilyn Carlson)

Pattie Rutten, peace and strength as she recovers from a broken femur and the loss of her husband. (aunt of Mark Howe)

Paul Salazar continued recovery from a heart attack. (step-father to Cheryl Hauser)

Lyle Bentley successful radiation treatment. (Don Robertson)

Bodil Isop healing and comfort from shingles.

Perrin Green 4 years old, unexplained brain activity leading to seizures. (Mary Ann Hult)

Marilyn Grey comfort as she enters hospice care. (mother to Mark Cron)

Dave Carlson continued strength, healing and comfort following kidney transplant surgery.

Emily Gacek acquired COVID19 from a caregiver, healing and strength. (Connie Fletcher)

Guests of the Community Meals Program safety, health and peace of mind. (Connie Fletcher)

Sonja 3 years old undergoing treatment for cancer. (granddaughter of Henrik & Patty Christopherson)

Nicole DeCamp healing and strength. (Ken DeCamp and Cheryl Leiter)

Josee Jordan peace of mind as she faces health challenges. (Dianne Tanner)

Jeannie Lindquist continued healing and strength.

Healing and peace of mind: Evy Sneva (Karen Hansen), **Marian James**; **Douglas Mandt** (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); **Gregory** (nephew of Joanne Suttmeier); **Doug Patur**; **Katie Moeller**; **Margot Inman**; **Ken Acker** (son of Lucy Acker); **Marilyn Carlson**; **Taufik Hidayut** (Ken Konigsmark); **Don Wilkinson** (husband of Gwynn Wilkinson); **Rebecca Thomas**; **Tanisha Foote** (Marilyn Carlson); **Dorothy Soland**; **Randi Strom**;

Jeanne Kuipers; **Talton Johnson**; **John Pass**; **Florence Kinnune**; **Carol Harbolt**; **Sandy Aldworth**; **Jen Winslow**; **Larry Pruitt**.

Undergoing cancer treatment: **Amy Aldworth** (daughter-in-law of Sandy Aldworth) **Les Carlson** (father of Dave Carlson); **Harold Mandt** (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); **Chris Howe** (brother of Mark Howe); **Peggy Scalise** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Eileen Letts** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Keith DeCamp** (brother of Ken DeCamp); **Barbara Jones** (mother of Ron Sordahl); **Doug McVety** (Helen Nychay); **Al Batt** (Connie Fletcher); **Larry Harbolt** (Ray Harbolt); **Gerald Welch** (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); **Joe Martin** (father of Stacy Smith); **Christy Williams** (Bill Bergsma); **Diane Powis** (Paul Tolo); **Dana Mancini** (Jan Setterlund); **Greg Petersen** (Wes Collum); **Barry Donker** (Joan Parish); **Germaine Korum** (Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Kathryn Aitcheson** (Gerrie Hendrickson); **Yuko Takiguchi** (Teiko Soland); **Barb** (Janette Singley)

Living with cancer: **Liz Kidd** (Bob Beck); **Duane Jacobson**; **Mary Lewis** (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Mark Becker** (uncle of Paula Seeger); **Barbara Krogh Jarvis** (sister of Steve Krogh); **Suzanne Lewis** (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); **Mira Bergsma**

Mourning the death of loved ones: For peace and comfort during this time of grieving for the family and friends of: **Sheila Aldworth** (daughter-in-law to Sandy Aldworth); **Richard "Dick" Birdsall** (Dianne Tanner); **Germaine Korum** (Lyle & Alice Lewis); **Bob Gray** (Doug & Dianne Tanner); **Fran Hildebrand** (Karen Hansen); **Joe Rutten** (uncle of Mark Howe); **Don Brannon** [former member of OSLC] (Rowan Hinds); **Don McWhirter** (Rowan Hinds)

Members and friends serving in the military; fire & police departments, & emergency rooms.

Global Missions and Missionaries: For peace in Hong Kong. (Global Missions). Congregations in Chiclayo, Peru: **Pepe** at Las Brisas, **Merci** in San Antonio and **Harold** at Las Lomas. **MaaSae Girls Lutheran Secondary School** in Tanzania.

