



## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Bethel & Hemnes Lutheran Churches

July 12, 2020

*For the next three Sundays, the gospel readings present the image of the seed. Though it is very small and seemingly insignificant, the seed contains its entire future; with light and nourishment it will grow and prosper. The seed is a vital image of faith in God, baptism, a congregation's life, the word, and the great paradox at the center of Christian faith: God brings flourishing life out of what appears to be little, dormant, even dead. It is a primary image of faith's central mystery: the dying and rising of Christ. There is ground for hope here.*

Today the Church commemorates Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, d. 1931. Bishop Söderblom encouraged a renewal of the ancient worship of the church and founded one of the organizations that later joined others to become the World Council of Churches. He received the Nobel Prize for peace in 1930.

### †GATHERING†

#### CONFESSON AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we begin.*

- P. We are gathered in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
C. Amen.
- P. Trusting God's promise of forgiveness, let us confess our sin against God and one another..  
*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*
- P. Loving God,  
C. we confess that we have not loved You with our whole hearts; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have failed to worship You with our whole being and to share the abundance of grace You give us. We have acted out of selfish ambition rather than the interests of others; we have nursed grudges rather than seeking reconciliation and peace. Forgive us and renew in us the mind of Christ Jesus, that we may live according to Your will. Amen.
- P. Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. In the mercy of Almighty God, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; and for His sake, I declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sin, in the name of the Father, and the + Son, and the Holy Spirit. (*Rom. 5:1a, 5b, 8b*)  
C. Amen.

#### GREETING

- P. 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

- P. 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 Lord. C. Amen.

## † WORD †

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-13

*God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing rain. What God says, will happen. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.*

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
    and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
    giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup>so 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 succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup>For you shall go out in joy,  
    and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
    shall burst into song,  
    and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup>Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
    instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,  
    for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

### Psalm 65

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion;  
to You shall vows be performed in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>To You that hear prayer shall all flesh come,  
    because of their transgressions.

<sup>3</sup>Our sins are stronger than we are,  
but You will blot them out.

<sup>4</sup>Happy are they whom You choose and draw to Your courts to dwell there!  
They will be satisfied by the beauty of Your house,  
    by the holiness of Your temple.

<sup>5</sup>Awesome things will You show us in Your righteousness, O God of our salvation,  
O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away.

<sup>6</sup>You make fast the mountains by Your power;  
they are girded about with might.

<sup>7</sup>You still the roaring of the seas,  
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup>Those who dwell at the ends of the earth  
will tremble at Your marvelous signs;  
    You make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.

<sup>9</sup>You visit the earth and water it abundantly; You make it very plenteous;  
the river of God is full of water.

- <sup>10</sup>You prepare the grain,  
for so You provide for the earth.
- <sup>11</sup>You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;  
with heavy rain You soften the ground and bless its increase.
- <sup>12</sup>You crown the year with Your goodness,  
and Your paths overflow with plenty.
- <sup>13</sup>May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,  
and the hills be clothed with joy.
- <sup>14</sup>May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,  
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain;  
let them shout for joy and sing.

#### SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11

*Paul has explained that, in spite of good intentions, no human being can ever please God by living in complete obedience to the law. Still, we have been reconciled to God through Christ Who condemns sin and frees us from its death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.*

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>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, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>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 Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

#### HOLY GOSPEL: St. Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*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.*

C. (spoken) Glory to you, O Lord.

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And He told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they

withered away.<sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.<sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.<sup>9</sup> Let anyone with ears listen!"

<sup>18</sup> "Hear then the parable of the sower.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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."

P. The Gospel of the Lord. C. (*spoken*) Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
    creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son,  
    our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the  
    Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was  
    crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated  
    at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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

## † PRAYER †

### OFFERING

If you have not signed up for electronic giving, you can mail your offering in to Bethel (P.O. Box 126, Porter, 56280), you may drop it in the offering box at the church, or you may make your offering online at our website ([www.bethelofporter.com](http://www.bethelofporter.com)).

### OFFERTORY PRAYER

- P. Gracious God,
- C. You open Your hand, filling our lives with all good things and renewing the face of the earth. We offer our gifts in thanksgiving for all that we have received from Your bounty. Accept them for the sake of Him who offered His life for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Praying separately in our homes yet called by the Spirit into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for the church, the world and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, Your word has been sown in many ways and in many 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,

C. hear our prayer.

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. We pray for all animals in search of water, for farms and fields that are devastated by drought and for everyone who is suffering from the heat. Empower us to sustainably use what You have given us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

Sovereign God, We pray for our nations leaders. Increase their desire for justice and equality. Purge our society of racism. We pray for our enemies. Bridge the chasms that divide us and guide authorities in our country and around the world to a deep and lasting peace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

Abiding God, care for all who are in need. For those who are doubting, renew faith. For those who are worrying or anxious, provide release. For those who are struggling, ease burdens. For those in fear, give hope. We pray especially for the thousands who each day are contracting the coronavirus and for the medical workers who are caring for them. We pray for those without jobs or health care, and for the researchers working to find a vaccine. We pray for those who are ill, especially Merv, Emily, Angie, Shirlee, and Lynette. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

Renewing God, revive Your church in this place. Nourish and nurture the seeds You have planted, that we might grow as disciples. Replace what has been depleted. Sustain our ministries and deepen our relationships with the wider community. Give us wisdom as we resume worshipping in our building. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

Eternal God, we give thanks for all who have died, especially Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, whom we commemorate today. Comfort us in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

O merciful God, receive these prayers, and grant us Your Spirit of peace and joy, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Amen.

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Praise and thanks to You, holy God, for by Your Word You made all things: You spoke light into the darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For Your Word of life, O God,

C. we give You thanks and praise.

By Your Word You called Your people Israel to tell of Your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life, O God,  
**C. we give You thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, Your Word made flesh, You speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of Your self-giving love. For Your Word of life, O God,

**C. we give You thanks and praise.**

Send Your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle Your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of the world in need. Faithful to Your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on You; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**C. Amen.**

### 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  
        but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine kingdom,  
    and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### † SENDING †

#### BLESSING

P. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. May you be rooted and grounded in His love.  
Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C. Amen**

#### DISMISSAL

P. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**C. Thanks be to God.**

#### Those who Serve:

**Ministers:** All the People of God

**Presider:** Pastor Ellen Munter

**Camera:** Josh Sumption

#### How to reach us:

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Offering: During this period of suspended in-person worship services, Bethel and Hemnes continue to have recurring expenses. Please remember to give financially to support the ministry of our congregations. For Bethel, you may mail your offering to the church office or give online at <http://bit.ly/givebethel>



Merv Anderson

Emily Morton

Angie Denelsbeck Anderson

Shirlee Gabbert

Lynette Christie

### Acknowledgements

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Permission has been granted for churches to use liturgical and musical material without licensing during this time of pandemic.

Prayers of Intercession: Sundays and Seasons and Gail Ramshaw, lightly edited by Pastor Munter.



We will be returning to in-person  
worship  
at Bethel next Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>!

Please read the next page for additional information  
regarding our reopening protocol.

# We need your help to keep everyone safe as we reopen.

Enter from the main double doors off the parking lot or the driveway.



Everyone attending Bethel will need to:

- Wear a face mask
- Sanitize hands when entering
- Remember social distancing -six feet of distance between you or your family and the next person or family.
- Seating in every other pew from the front to the back (*very unLutheran*)
- Dismissal will be from the back to the front .
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Masks and hand sanitizer will be available. Please try not to crowd each other as you enter and leave.

Holy Communion will not be served on this first Sunday we are gathering. If all goes well, we plan on resuming the sacrament the first Sunday in August.

While we look forward to seeing everyone, please remain at home if you are feeling ill, or have recently attended a large gathering where face masks were not in use or social distancing was not possible.

We will continue to live stream the worship service for the foreseeable future.