St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 16, 2017

To reap a great harvest, you must plant generously in faith.

Rev. Arden Dorn, Transitional Minister

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Gathering
The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

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.

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, full of compassion and mercy, abounding in steadfast love.
Amen.

Trusting God’s promise of forgiveness, let us confess our sin against God and one another. Amen.

The assembly shall kneel as they are able.

Eternal God our Creator, in you we live and move and have our being. Look upon us, your children, the work of your hands. Forgive us all our offenses, and cleanse us from proud thoughts and empty desires. By your grace draw us near to you, our refuge and our strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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, Christ died for us while we still were sinners; and for his sake, God forgives you all your sins.
Amen.

The assembly stands.

GATHERING WORDS

Morning has broken like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain’s new fall, sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God’s feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning,
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise ev’ry morning,
God’s recreation of the new day!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. Amen.
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God’s people on earth.

All

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,

we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,

you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,

you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,

in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
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.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-13

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.

10 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,
11 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.
12 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.
13 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.

Word of God, word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE PSALM: Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

R Your paths overflow with plenty.

1 You are to be praised, O | God, in Zion; to you shall vows | be fulfilled.
2 To you, the one | who answers prayer, to you all | flesh shall come.
3 Our sins are strong- | er than we are, but you blot out | our transgressions.
4 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. R
5 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 oceans | far away.
6 you are girded a- | bout with might.
7 You still the roaring | of the seas,
  the roaring of their waves, and the clamor | of the peoples.
8 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. R
9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is | full of water.
  You prepare the grain, for so you provide | for the earth.
10 You drench the furrows and smooth | out the ridges;
    with heavy rain you soften the ground and | bless its increase.
11 You crown the year | with your goodness,
  and your paths over- | flow with plenty.
12 May the fields of the wilderness be | rich for grazing,
  and the hills be | clothed with joy.
13 May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak them- | selves with grain;
    let them shout for | joy and sing. R

SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11

There is no condemnation for those who live in Christ. God sent Christ to accomplish what the law was unable to do: condemn sin and free us from its slavery. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.

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

9 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. 10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 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.

Word of God, word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Halle, halle, hallelujah.
Halle, halle, hallelujah.
Halle, halle, hallelujah.
Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 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. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with ears listen!”

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

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ!

The assembly is seated.

SERMON
CAROLYN EDWARDS

The assembly stands.

WORDS OF THE DAY

Open now thy gates of beauty,
Zion, let me enter there,
where my soul in joyful duty
waits for God who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place,
filled with solace, light, and grace!

Gracious God, I come before thee;
come thou also unto me;
where we find thee and adore thee,
there a heav'n on earth must be.
To my heart, oh, enter thou,
let it be thy temple now!
Here thy praise is gladly chanted,  
here thy seed is duly sown;  
let my soul, where it is planted,  
bring forth precious sheaves alone,  
so that all I hear may be  
fruitful unto life in me.

Thou my faith increase and quicken,  
let me keep thy gift divine;  
howsoever temptations thicken,  
may thy word still o'er me shine  
as my guiding star through life,  
as my comfort in all strife.

Speak, O God, and I will hear thee,  
let thy will be done indeed;  
may I undisturbed draw near thee  
while thou dost thy people feed.  
Here of life the fountain flows;  
here is balm for all our woes.

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 INTERCESSION

Called together in the Spirit’s embrace, let us pray for the mending of God’s world. Humble God, lead your church in the way of service. Prosper the work of campus ministries and Young Adults in Global Mission as they raise up leaders to serve the world. Lord, in your mercy, Your mercy is great. Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Cultivating God, bless and encourage all who work the land to feed your people. Give them joy in their vocation. Shower rain on crops and health on livestock. Lord, in your mercy, Your mercy is great. Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.
Holy One, you command peace to the nations. Give peaceful hearts and discerning minds to world leaders and citizens alike, that all who suffer violence and hunger come to know the fullness of life. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, you bid the weary come to you for rest. Renew energy for bone-tired people. Support our brothers and sisters who are burdened by grief, loneliness, injury and illness especially Pauline, Shane, Linda, Norma, Ann, Lorene, Steve, Francis, Carol, Ella, Emil, Dottie, Charles, Eli, Steve, Hope, Tom, Bo, Lawrence, Mary Ruth, Kyle, Cody, and Norma: meet their need by your bountiful compassion and our community’s action. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of everything, you have compassion for all that you have made. Show our congregation what mercy looks like in our own community, that we become faithful partners in your ministry. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of life, we give you thanks and praise for all the people who have blessed our lives, for saints among us whose steadfast faith has strengthened ours Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your care through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

*And also with you.*

*Peace is shared among the assembly, and then the assembly is seated.*

**Meal**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**OFFERING** An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

*The assembly stands.*

**WORDS OF OFFERING**

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

Merciful God, you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

\[
\text{Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow’r and might,}
\text{heaven and earth are full of your glory.}
\text{Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.}
\text{Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.}
\text{Hosanna in the highest.}
\]
THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD’S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

The assembly joins hands to pray:

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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread. Our Lord’s body let us take together.

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION – All are WELCOME at the table of the Lord.

No matter what you have done or your situation, Christ invites, to His table, all who love Him and earnestly repent of their sin and who seek to live in peace with one another. Children or anyone choosing not to commune, but wishing to be blessed, may indicate this by folding their arms across their chest. Anyone who is unable to come forward may indicate to an usher that you wish to receive communion where you are seated.
Following Communion, the assembly stands.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Jesus Christ, host of this meal, you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore. Amen.

*The assembly is seated.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Sending*

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*The assembly stands.*

**BLESSING**

May God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, grant you the gifts of faith and hope. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.

**WORDS OF SENDING**

Sent forth by God's blessing,  
our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.  
The supper is ended.  
Oh, now be extended  
the fruits of this service in all who believe.  
The seed of Christ's teaching,  
receptive souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action for God and for all.  
Your grace shall incite us,  
your love shall unite us  
to work for your kingdom and answer your 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 God's children, the whole human 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
DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.
Thanks be to God.

DOXOLOGY (ELW p. 884) Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Today we welcome Carolyn Edwards to our pulpit! Professional writer Carolyn Edwards completed the Parish Ministry Training Program a couple of years ago. The training served to encourage her to find new ways to actively serve the Lord. She lives in Bandera, has two adopted children, three grandsons, and three cats.

For Prayerful consideration

Ill or Injured

For those in the military
Nick Adams, Allen Bowles, Justin Chandler, Justin Elkins, Rodney Foreman, Jamaica Goodhue, Taylor Griffin, Jacob Jones, Felipe Leal, Jr., Garrett Peterson, Michael Rosales, James Skinner, Kassie Thompson, John Vasquez, and Delmiro Villanueva.

Birthday
Robert Gibbens, Jr. (July 20)

Anniversary
Mike & Dale Tessman (July 19)

Welcome!

We have all come to St. Paul’s by different paths, and from various walks of life. Through worship, study, prayer and fellowship we each seek to deepen our faith, comfort and encourage one another and dedicate our lives more fully to sharing Christ in our homes, our community and the world. All are welcome at St. Paul’s. We are eager to know you, and we invite you to get to know us.

Communion and Visitor Registration Cards are located in the pew racks. We ask that each member and visitor complete a Communion Card when communing, and visitors complete a Visitor card. Completed cards may be placed in the offering plate as it is passed.

A Nursery is located at the rear of the sanctuary in the overflow area.

If you are unable to hear, require a bulletin, or need any other assistance, please signal an usher.
Upcoming Lay Reader

July 23 – Shelley Gibbens

Volunteers Needed for Visitation Program at Detention Centers

El Refugio (Pen pal and Visitation Program) in Georgia has identified many men who have been transferred to the Karnes City Detention Center. The Interfaith Welcome Coalition is seeking one-time or regular visitors for these English-speaking African men. Help them know they are not alone and forgotten! They also need someone who would be available to contact places of worship, universities and other groups who might be interested in going as a group to make visits.

Contact Paul Pfeifer at (830) 534-4017 or mondomofo@aol.com if you have questions or are interested in participating.