

**SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**

A Service of the Word

July 12, 2020



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 East Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA 17538

*United in Christ,
we are called to love and serve.*

**SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**
Service of the Word



P: Pastor A: Assisting Minister C: Congregation & Pastor

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

We Are The Lord's

R. Martin

† **THE GATHERING** †

*The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week,
the day of Christ's resurrection.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Creator God, patient Teacher, persuasive Spirit, you are tireless in speaking to us, but we find it easy to close our minds, to refuse to hear what would require painful change, to reject the truth because it is inconvenient. Forgive deliberate denseness of mind, fearful resistance to change, stubborn insistence that our way is the best way. Continue your speaking until we hear. Try new parables on us until we think and understand. Argue with us until we do your will. What else will your love in Christ allow you to do? Amen.

Silence for reflection.

P: Friends, hear the Good News! All who are moved by the Spirit of God are children of God. We are heirs of God's splendor with Jesus Christ. Believe the Good News! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Our gracious and loving Lord is the essence of generosity and patience. Rest in and rely on God's love and forgiveness. Amen.

(Verse 1)

You are the seed that will
Grow a new sprout;
You're a star that will
Shine in the night;

You are the yeast and a
Small grain of salt,
A beacon to glow in the dark.

You are the dawn that will
Bring a new day;
You're the wheat that will
Bear golden grain;

You are a sting and a
Soft, gentle touch,
To witness wherever You go.

(Refrain)

Go, my friends, go to the world,
Proclaim the great love of God;
Messengers to tell the way of life,
Peace and pardon for all.

Be, my friends, a loyal witness,
From the dead Christ arose;
"Lo, I'll be with you forevermore,
Till the end of the world."

(Verse 2)

You are the flame that will
Lighten the dark,
So resplendent with hope,
Faith and love;



You are the shepherds to
Lead the whole world
To waters and pastures of peace.

You are the friends that I
Chose for myself,
You're the word that I
Want to proclaim.

You are the new reign of
God built on rock,
Where justice and truth are at home.

(Refrain)

Go, my friends, go to the world,
Proclaim the great love of God;
Messengers to tell the way of life,
Peace and pardon for all.

Be, my friends, a loyal witness,
From the dead Christ arose;
"Lo, I'll be with you forevermore,
Till the end of the world."

(Verse 3)

You are the life that will
Nurture the plant;
You're the waves in a
Turbulent sea;

Yesterday's yeast is
Beginning to rise,
A new loaf of bread it will yield.

There is no place for a city to hide,
There's no mountain can
Cover its might;

Let your light shine so that your
Loving works
Give honor and glory to God.



(Refrain)

Go, my friends, go to the world,
Proclaim the great love of God;
Messengers to tell the way of life,
Peace and pardon for all.

Be, my friends, a loyal witness,
From the dead Christ arose;
“Lo, I’ll be with you forevermore,
Till the end of the world.”

THE GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with you, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

† THE WORD †

God speaks to us in Scriptures read and preached.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:10-13

A: A reading from Isaiah.

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, 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. 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. 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.

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:1-11

A: A reading from Romans.

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, 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.

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-33

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13th chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Barbara Caruana

P:

*Grace and peace to you from
God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

It's all a matter of perspective, or would it be more appropriate to say there are distinct differences between optimists and pessimists. For example, a pessimist is one who says the glass is half empty; on the other hand, the optimist says the same glass is half full. Here's an interesting question. What if someone were to ask you to share what's in that half empty/half-full glass? What part would you share? Something or nothing? Think about that.

This half empty/half-full perspective makes me wonder about people in general ... whether we're partially blessed or partially needy; partially rich or partially poor; partially grateful and generous; or partially resentful and selfish. How do you really know, or are we both?

The glass is half empty perspective really inspires one way of thinking and living, just as the other perspective, the half full one, inspires a radically different way of thinking and living. Yet both perspectives are based on the same objective facts: the same glass and the same amount in the glass. What matters is how we see things.

The parable Jesus just told us in today's gospel reading has at its very core this idea of how we see things.

We need to see things in these days first by remembering that this parable is about us. We are the sowers; we are the ones called to “go out and sow”; to try to live as our faith calls us to live; to try to share our faith in word and deed with those God puts in our path; and to share the love of God that has been so abundantly given to us.

And that means doing stuff – it means action. It involves reaching out to people; it involves serving, and caring, and risking, and all sorts of things like that. But, if we try to do this stuff, if we try to offer ourselves, our time, our energy, and our caring to others, then before very long (sometimes almost immediately), we may wonder whether it’s worth it ... whether anything of value or meaning is going to come from all our efforts.

And we’ll wonder that because we’ll notice pretty darn quickly that a whole lot of what we do is wasted. Nothing much comes of it. That’s right. A lot is wasted ... and I’d like you to hold on to that thought, because we’ll want to come back to it after we look at this parable some more.

The first people who heard this story knew all about a sower going out to sow. They saw it happen year in and year out. They knew that seed was usually sown by broadcasting it. That means the farmer would walk along and toss it out in every which direction. The land was plowed later, after it had been sown. This means that when they were tossing out the seeds, it was virtually impossible to tell what sort of soil it was landing on. It all looked pretty much the same from the point of view of the one who was out there planting. And what’s more, if the sower stopped every few yards to take a soil sample, they would come to the conclusion that their yield would be pretty lousy, and the townspeople would starve.

So everything Jesus said about thin soil, rocks, fat birds, thorns, weeds, whatever ... was all old news to them. That was the way it always worked. Probably most of what was sown was wasted, and they knew it!

Now, if the important parts of this parable were about the soils, and the difficulties that come with planting anything, and the dangers involved, and the seeds that would be wasted, then there was no big deal here at all. There was nothing new or interesting in it. The folks listening already knew all about that.

But there’s one thing that was really shocking to the first people who heard this parable. That had to do with the yield ... the harvest. Seven or eight-fold was

hoped for. Tenfold was phenomenal, and anything above that was simply unheard of.

Yet even the poorest yield in the parable was beyond their experience, and the greatest almost beyond comprehension. To promise this sort of result was more than optimistic – it was to live in a whole different way; it was to operate out of a whole different vision.

To sow with this sort of hope and vision is to have the perspective of the Kingdom of God. With this vision you don't mind the rocks or the birds or the thin soil or whatever else may get in the way. All that stuff just doesn't matter. It's swallowed up in the promise of the whole enterprise. This perspective, the promise of a vast harvest, is the heart of this little story.

After all, we already know that much of what we do is wasted. We know that very well. We already know what it's like to try and try and try to care and to make a difference and not get anywhere, or not be noticed, or not succeed, or (maybe even worse) not be appreciated. If the parable is about that, then it doesn't have much new or interesting to say to us either.

So instead, remember that the point of the parable, and the point of what we do, is that, by the grace of God, the harvest will be great beyond measure, great beyond belief, great beyond imagining. What God will make of our efforts is more than we can imagine. Much will be wasted, that's true ... but it's also OK.

And the one who sows ... that's us ... doesn't need to worry about that. The one who sows is simply called to scatter the seed – to love and to serve and to trust. The rest will be taken care of. That's not because of our abilities; it's because of the power of God.

This perspective of hope and confidence is the gift of this parable. There's a carefree abandon to this image. We're to love and to serve in broadcast fashion – knowing full well that most of what we do won't amount to anything, that bad things are going to happen – but trusting, none the less, in the incomprehensible abundance of the harvest. It's unfortunate that much will be wasted, at least as we see it. Maybe even our very favorite seed, our best, most self-sacrificing good deed, our smartest remark, our greatest insight, will end up on a rocky path or inside some fat bird. But that's not ours to control; it's not ours to fix, it's not even ours to worry about.

Each one of us individually, and our church as a whole ... all of us together have at our feet fields to walk and seed to sow. We're called to do that. This parable is a gift to lighten our step and extend our reach. It gives us the wonderful gift of perspective so we can wave at the birds and smile at the weeds.

The Good News is that we just don't need to worry. God will take care of everything for us.

And to that I say, "Thanks be to God. Amen.

SERMON HYMN

Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil
(Sing through twice)

ELW 512

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.

APOSTLES' CREED

P: With the words of the Apostles' Creed, we proclaim our faith.

C: **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 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.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

A: Let us pray.

Lord, sometimes we allow long dry spells to occur in our spiritual lives. As the ground of our hearts is neglected, it becomes hard and unyielding. This is what happens when we fail to cultivate the soil of our hearts with your word.

Refresh our parched and thirsty spirits with the water of life. Send the rain of your Spirit into our hearts, so the ground of our souls may be softened, and your word will take root and grow.

Then, Lord, may the word of life take hold of us so that we grow into productive members of your kingdom. Help us to bear fruit thirty, sixty, and hundredfold. Make us fruitful in good works and help us to share in your saving grace and enjoy bringing in your harvest.

We pray for all who have unrewarding work to do, for all whose cries fall on stony ground, for all who labor but are unfulfilled and frustrated, and for all who are choked by the cares and the riches of the world. We remember all who feel their work is a waste and have lost hope of growing or achieving anything.

Help us to bring the fruits of your Spirit into our homes. May our homes be places where love, joy, and peace thrive. May we nurture the young in the ways of truth and goodness. We pray for the homeless, and for those who look in hope to have a home of their own.

Lord, protect all who are not at peace in themselves or at peace with those around them. We pray for all who are sick, those facing adversity, those who are tempted to give up, and for all who are suffering and are unable to cope on their own. We especially remember all those on Zion's prayer list. May each set their minds on the Spirit, on life, and on peace.

We remember all who are renewed and refreshed in your eternal kingdom, and pray that one day we may share with them in that glory.

Lord of all, we ask that you accept these prayers we offer to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who taught us to pray together saying ...

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 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.

† **A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** †

A prayer of thanks to God by his faithful people.

P: Creator of the visible and the invisible, divine Deliverer, life-sustaining Spirit: All that is depends on you and rejoices in your praise. You blot out our sins and free us to live as your children in love and helpfulness. Your Spirit both inspires our prayers and promotes our growth in Christ. All you deliver from sin and death praise you with joy in their hearts. We especially give you thanks, O God, and rejoice in the reassuring voice of the Spirit, calling us into one loving family with you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

† **THE SENDING** †

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

HYMN

Amazing Love

BB 80

(Verse 1)

My Lord, what love is this
That pays so dearly,
That I, the guilty one,
May go free?

Amazing love,
Oh, what sacrifice,
The Son of God giv'n for me;

My debt he pays
And my Death he dies,
That I might live, that I might live.



(Verse 2)

And so they watched him die,
Despised, rejected;
But oh, the blood he shed
Flowed for me.

Amazing love,
Oh, what sacrifice,
The Son of God giv'n for me;

My debt he pays
And my death he dies,
That I might live, that I might live.

And now this love of Christ
Shall flow like rivers;
Come, wash your guilt away,
Live again.

Amazing love,
Oh, what sacrifice,
The Son of God giv'n for me;

My debt he pays
And my death he dies,
That I might live, that I might live.

BLESSING

P: Go out into the world in peace; be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good; render no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor everyone; love and serve the Lord rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and may the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you now and forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: United in Christ, go forth to love and serve.

POSTLUDE

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

S. Temple

PRAYER LIST

FOR HEALING

Adele King	Barbara Williams	Dave Wise
Kevin Reinhart	Fred Hamor	Joe Adams
Judie Ingersoll	Lucy Davis	Bill Grove
Kay Crawford	Holly Hoover	Betty Stoner
Don Heartter	Janet & Harry Musselman	
Bob Steinmetz (Brother of Diane Gerlach)		
Homer Dietz (Brother-in-law of Harry Musselman)		
Ginny Eisenhower (Sister of Dolly Overly)		
Ron Sahn (Friend of Dave Wise)		
Wilson Pipkin (Father of Wilson Pipkin)		
Loma Slike (Mother of Sue Wise)		
Mike LaFatta (Son-in-law of Bill & Julia Grove)		

FOR COMFORT, PEACE, STRENGTH, & SAFETY

Richard and Marilyn Heim
Arlene Miller
Deb McCartney
Marlin Zimmerman
Charlotte & George Potts
Bette Geibel
Jennifer Thompson
Ted Symonds & Family
Betty Benner (Sister of Sam King)
Residents and Staff of the Phoenixville Care & Rehabilitation Center
Arlene Wise (Sister-in-law of Dave Wise)
Vaun Hile (Father of Lynda Sherwood)
Jennifer Kready (Daughter of Dave & Donna Dumeyer)

FOR PROTECTION FOR MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS

Christopher Wright	Chris Andrew	Thom Whitesel
Ryan Stitzel	Doug Kautter	Justin Gorlaski
Corey Landis (Nephew of Jesse & Pat Landis)		
David Adams (Son-in-law of John & Kathleen Hay, and husband of Liz)		

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Jessica Wise & Matthew Barcaro on their marriage this weekend!
...to Don & Laura Wierschke on their 50th wedding anniversary last month!