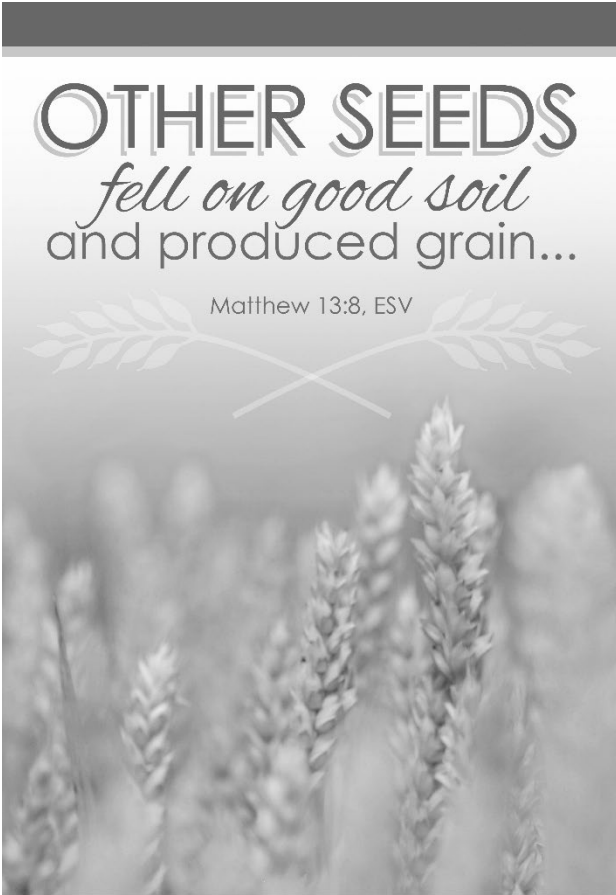


Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

OTHER SEEDS
fell on good soil
and produced grain...

Matthew 13:8, ESV



✝ Holy Communion ✝

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2026



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father,
and of the ✙ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near to God with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to grant us the forgiveness of all our sins, and through the grace of the Holy spirit, true repentance and amendment of our sinful lives.

Kneel

Silence is kept for meditation...

P: Almighty God, merciful Father:

C: I have sinned against you in thought, in word, and in deed;
By what I have done and what I have left undone.
I have not loved you with my whole heart, mind, and strength.
I have not loved my neighbor as myself.
For the sake of your beloved Son, who suffered upon the cross for me,
Have mercy upon me and forgive me all my sin!

P: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. As a Called and Ordained minister of the church of Jesus Christ, and by his authority, I declare to you the forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Stand

GATHERING HYMN

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty.....LBW 250

APOSTOLIC 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.

HYMN OF PRAISE*Refrain*

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav'n-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of



God, you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the



Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.



A - men, a - men.

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 joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

Sit

WORD

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.

A: A Reading from Isaiah:

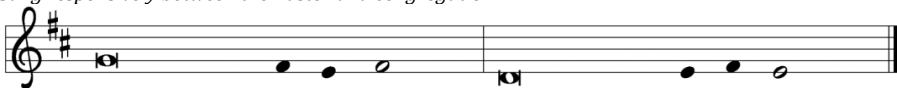
¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish 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.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 65:1-13*Sung responsively between the Pastor and congregation.*

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.

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 make firm the mountains | by your power;**
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.

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.

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 death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.

A: A Reading from Romans:

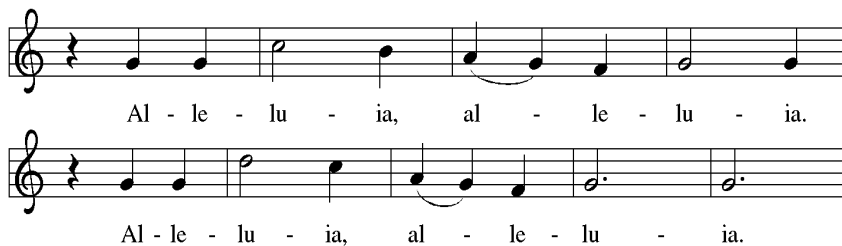
¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh 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, then the body is dead because of sin, but 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 Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

GOSPEL: 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.

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

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 a 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 If you have ears, hear!"

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 this age 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."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit
SERMON.....**Pastor Kliner**

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY***We Plow the Fields and Scatter***

1 We plow the fields and scat - ter The good seed on the land,
 2 He on - ly is the mak - er Of all things near and far;
 3 We thank you, our cre - a - tor, For all things bright and good,

But it is fed and wa - tered By God's al - might - y hand.
 He paints the way - side flow - er, He lights the eve - ning star.
 The seed - time and the har - vest, Our life, our health, our food.

He sends the snow in win - ter, The warmth to swell the grain,
 The winds and waves o - bey him; By him the birds are fed.
 No gifts have we to of - fer For all your love im - parts,

The breez - es and the sun - shine, And soft re - fresh - ing rain.
 Much more to us, his chil - dren, He gives our dai - ly bread.
 But what you most would trea - sure— Our hum - ble, thank - ful hearts.

Refrain
 All good gifts a - round us Are sent from heav'n a - bove.

Then thank the Lord, oh, thank the Lord For all his love.

Sit

SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

P: In Holy Baptism our gracious heavenly Father liberates us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; in the waters of Baptism we are reborn children of God and inheritors of eternal life. By water and the Holy Spirit we are made members of the Church which is the body of Christ. As we live with him and with his people, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

The pastor addresses the child.

Averi Marie Weaver, do you desire to be baptized?

P: In Christian love you have presented this child for Holy Baptism. You should, therefore, faithfully care for her and help her in every way as God gives you opportunity, that she may bear witness to the faith we profess, and that, living in the covenant of her Baptism and in communion with the Church, she may lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ.

P: Do you promise to fulfill these obligations?

R: I do.

Stand

PRAYERS

A brief silence is held after the introduction.

P: Let us pray for the Church, the world, and all people according to their need...

After each petition:

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

The prayers conclude:

P: All these things, most merciful God, we commend into your hands, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen!**

Sit

Water is poured into the font.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We give you thanks, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and you created heaven and earth. By the gift of water, you nourish and sustain us and all living things. By the waters of the flood you condemned the wicked and saved those

whom you had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection your beloved Son has set us free from the bondage to sin and death, and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life. He made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In obedience to his command, we make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, so that she who is here baptized may be given new life. Wash away the sin of those who are cleansed by this water and bring them forth as inheritors of your glorious kingdom.

To you be given praise and honor and worship through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

P: Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

R: I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

R: I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

R: I renounce them.

Stand

P: Do you believe in God the Father?

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

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

C: 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.

P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

C: **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**

Sit

P: Averi Marie Weaver,
I baptize you in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Laying both hands on the head of the newly baptized, the pastor prays:

P: Let us pray,
God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for
freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin and for
raising them up to a new life through this holy sacrament. Pour
your Holy Spirit upon Averi Marie: the spirit of wisdom and
understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of
knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your
presence.

C: **Amen.**

The pastor marks the sign of the cross with oil on the forehead of the baptized. As the sign of the cross is made, the pastor says:

P: Averi Marie, child of God, you have been sealed
by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

The pastor presents a candle, lit from the paschal candle, to the baptized, and says:

P: Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good
works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The pastor addresses the candidate making affirmation

P Starr Samsel, you have made public profession of your faith before this
congregation. Now I ask you, do you intend to continue in the covenant God
made with you in Holy Baptism:
to live among God's faithful people,
to hear his Word and share in his supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

R: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

Stand

P: Gracious Lord, through water and the Spirit you have made this child and woman your own. You forgave them all your sins and brought them to newness of life. Continue to strengthen them with the Holy Spirit, and daily increase in them your gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence; through Jesus Christ, you Son, our Lord.

C Amen.

The pastor and the baptismal group face the congregation

C: We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as a fellow member of the body of Christ, a child of the same heavenly Father, and a worker with us in the kingdom of God.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.
Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you

Presentation of the Faith Chest

Sit

MEAL

OFFERING

The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.

ANTHEM

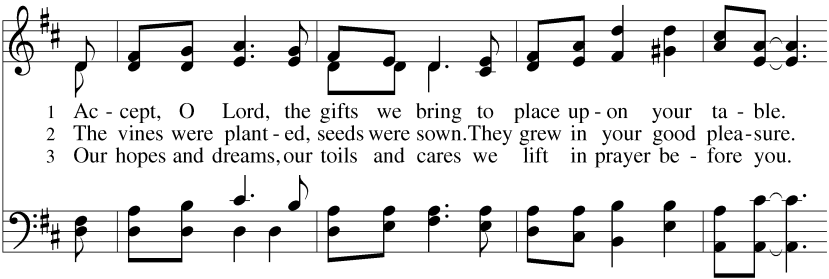
***I've Been Changed* Mosie Lister**

Duet – Bob Schweppenheiser and Mike Yoder

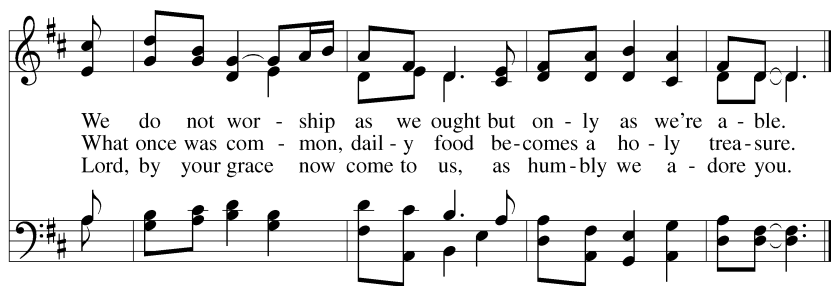
Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung



1 Ac - cept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place up - on your ta - ble.
2 The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They grew in your good plea - sure.
3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer be - fore you.

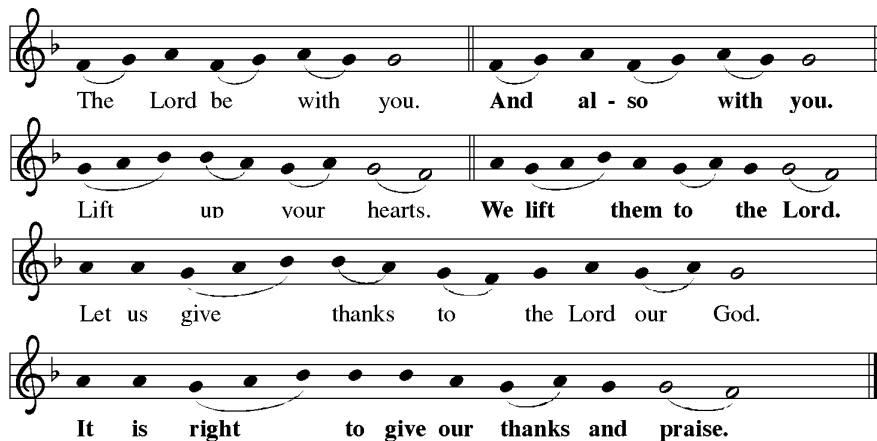


OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray... Blessed are you,

C: O Lord, our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness, you have blessed us with these gifts. With them, we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



PREFACE

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, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

[P]: Heavenly Father, you are holy indeed and all creation rightly gives you thanks and praise.

All life, all holiness comes from you, through your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit.

From age to age you gather a people unto yourself, so that, from the rising of the sun to its setting, a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your holy name.

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts:

We ask you to make them Holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.

For, in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying:

TAKE AND EAT.

THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

After supper He took the cup. Again, he gave Thanks and Praise to you and gave it them to drink saying:

DRINK OF THIS, ALL OF YOU:

THIS CUP IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT.

IT WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE
FORGIVENESS OF SIN.
DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

The mystery of faith:

C Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

P: And so, Father Most Holy, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious Resurrection and his ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice of praise—

Look with favor on your Church, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself.

Grant that we, who are nourished by our Lord's body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ Jesus.

May he make us an everlasting gift to you and enable us to share in the inheritance of your Saints: the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Holy Apostles and Martyrs, and all your Saints in Light, whose witness encourages us in our Faith.

Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth; together with our Bishops, Pastors, Deacons and the entire people your son has won for you.

Hear now the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you. In mercy and love, unite all your children wherever they may be.

Welcome into your Kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship.

There in your Kingdom, freed from the corruption of sin and death, we shall proclaim your glory with every creature, through Christ our Lord, through whom you give us everything that is good.

Through Him, with Him and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours almighty Father, now and forever.

C Amen.

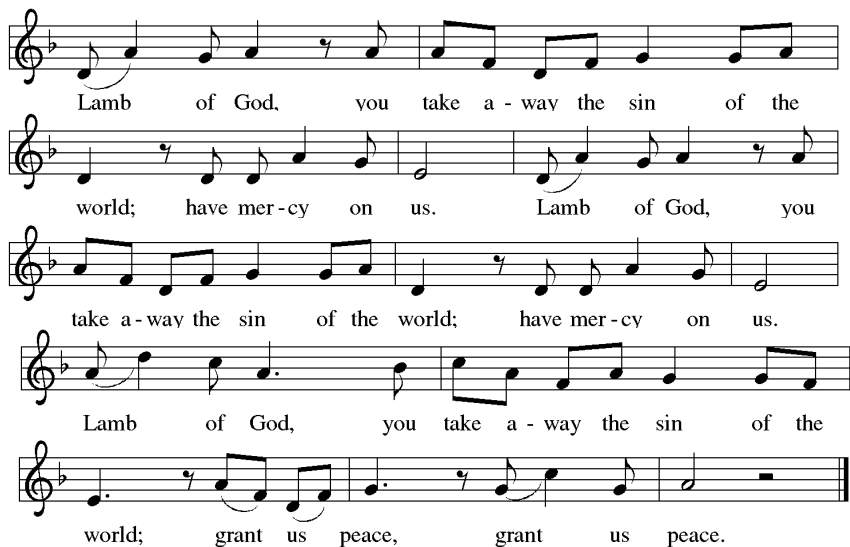
LORD'S PRAYER

P: Let us pray with confidence in the words that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us...

C: 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.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

C: Thanks be to God!

P: Come now and eat of the Bread of Life and drink of the Cup of
Salvation! Taste and see, the Lord is good!

C: Amen!

Sit

COMMUNION

All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen

COMMUNION HYMN

For the Fruit of All Creation



1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
 2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.
 3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.

For these gifts to ev - 'ry na - tion, thanks be to God.
 In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done.
 For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.

For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing,
 In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de - spair - ing,
 For the won - ders that as -ound us, for the truths that still con - found us,

fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
 in the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.
 most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958

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Outside USA: Arr. from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906.

Stand

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray

Father in Heaven, you have fed us with the Bread of Life, your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Sustain us by the work of the Holy Spirit, through this Holy Meal, that we may abide in Christ, and he in us, to the glory of your Holy Name.

C: Amen.

BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. And may almighty God—the Father, † The Son, and The Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Sent Forth by God's Blessing LBW 221

1 Sent forth by God's bless - ing, Our true faith con - fess - ing, The
2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing, To God ev - er - liv - ing, The

peo - ple of God from his dwell - ing take leave.
tasks of our ev - 'ry - day life we will face.

The sup - per is end - ed. Oh, now be ex - tend - ed The
Our faith ev - er shar - ing, In love ev - er car - ing, Em -

fruits of this ser - vice in all who be - lieve. The With
brac - ing his chil - dren of each tribe and race. The With

seed of his teach - ing, Re - cep - tive souls reach - ing, Shall
your feast you feed us, With your light now lead us; U -

blos - som in ac - tion for God and for all. His
nite us as one in this life that we share. Then

grace did in - vite us, His love shall u - nite us To
may all the liv - ing With praise and thanks - giv - ing Give

work for God's king - dom and an - swer his call.
hon - or to Christ and his name that we bear.

A: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Fred Harbaugh, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker, Susan Christ, Greg Eckenrode; **Lay Assistant:** Anita Bair; **Comm. Assist.:** Mary Schultz
Acolyte: Dylan Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Rita Strickler, Jeannie Bower
Greeters/Presenters: Fed and Meg Harbaugh
Flower Delivery: Susan Bryan

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Gary and Hali Fullmer.

The Sanctuary Lamp burns in memory of Nancy Porter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Messiah Church! It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. We hope to see you again.

Today we welcome into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Averie Marie Weaver, daughter of Christopher Weaver and Starr Sampsell, and through Affirmation of baptism Starr Samsel. We promise to keep them in our prayers, asking God's guidance as they raise their daughter in our Christian faith.

This Wednesday, July 15, 9:00 a.m. – Knot-A-Sack “Knotty Party” – Join us for a time of fellowship, good conversation, (and Sally's cookies!) while we knot the drawstrings to complete the backpacks.

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Rev. Gerald Kliner, STS, Senior Pastor
JARED GIST, ORGANIST

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The Generous Gardener

In this parable, Jesus tells the disciples a story of a gardener. While many people carefully plan where to plant seeds (with some modern farmers using technology to map out, down to the millimeter, where each seed will grow best), the gardener in Jesus' story scatters seed generously, almost carelessly.

As the disciples, familiar with farming and fishing, would have known deep within themselves, things don't come easy in this life. Faith is the same. Like seeds that take their time, when the conditions are right to grow and bear fruit, faith isn't always a steady path. There are seasons of cold isolation—times when prayer and devotions don't warm the heart as they once did. There are seasons of scorching busyness—times when endless distractions overwork the head enough to overheat. Faith might look different at these times, but no matter the season, faith is never gone.

Ultimately, faith isn't measured down to the millimeter. Instead, this haphazardly generous gardener extends faith into the impossible places. And when rocks, sun, or thorns from this world and within choke this faith that God has given us, the impossible becomes possible. In every season, God comes again and again to sprinkle more and more seed and to reach out to us before we can even try to grow on our own. And with time and divine Presence, that seed of faith starts to sprout.

Because of this never-ending abundance, every season is an opportunity to engage with God the generous gardener, whose nearness is always available and who gives the gift of faith, no matter the conditions. Today, let the summer breeze remind you of how close God's Spirit is, always nurturing and providing the abundance that is the essence of faith.

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