

We hope all is well with you!! Please contact the church at 291-6225 and leave a message if you or someone you know needs to be added to the prayer list.

3rd Sunday after Pentecost – June 13, 2021

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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

O God, you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Thus says the Lord GOD: "I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it out; I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain; on the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar; and under it will dwell all kinds of beasts; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it."

Psalm: 92:1-4, 12-15 A Song for the Sabbath.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to thy name, O Most High; to declare thy steadfast love in the morning, and thy faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For thou, O LORD, hast made me glad by thy work; at the works of thy hands I sing for joy.

The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD, they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green, to show that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17

So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men; but what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to be proud of us, so that you may be able to answer those who pride themselves on a man's position and not on his heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

The Holy Gospel According to Mark chapter 4, verses 26-34

[Jesus said], "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the

blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Devotion

When the house was built, it was with stone prepared at the quarry; so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the temple, while it was being built.

--1 Kings 6:7

Imagine the precision that had to be used to have the stones perfectly fit when they arrived at the temple site! Three-dimensional exactness had to be obtained at the quarry, for no pounding of any iron tool was to be heard at the site. Each block was custom made for an exact location to fit with the blocks beside and below.

Peter refers to believers as living stones (1 Peter 2:4-5). What kind of parallel can we see here? Jesus is the builder of the eternal temple of God, as the author of Hebrews declared (Hebrews 3:3-4). He must shape us to perfectly fit into the place God has for us and that includes fitting in with those around us. Each of us has a calling and a place in the temple. But what does this noiseless activity represent?

The pounding and shaping, the noisy activity, should go on outside the temple site. When we gather to worship, it is not the time to hash out our differences. There we quietly behold His glory or sing His praises. There, our focus is not on our fit with the stone next to us but the wonder of our Savior. O come let us adore Him. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

The hammering and shaping should go on in the quarry. One on one with the Lord, we should allow ourselves to be shaped. The places we do not fit with the other living stones must be chiseled away. That noisy and often painful activity goes on in the quarry with Jesus so that we do not disturb the focus of others as we gather to worship corporately. Are you letting Him remove from you the protrusions in your life that keep you from fitting perfectly with the rest of the building?

Take time alone with God to let Him make some reductions in you so that you fit with the other living stones.

Offering

Please consider to continue to give to your church and your ministry here and around the world. Checks can be mailed to the church.

Offering Prayer

Merciful God, our ordinary gifts seem small for such a celebration, but you make of them an abundance, just as you do with our lives. Feed us again at this table for service in your name, in the strength of the risen Christ. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

O Most High, we give thanks to You that You have planted Your Holy Word among us. Give healthy growth to Our Church, that we may weather the storm-winds of this world steadfast in Christ, ever bearing the fruits of love and singing praises to Your name. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, Your Holy Spirit plants Your Word and causes it to sprout and grow as it pleases You. Bless the preaching and teaching of Your Word, that Your kingdom may be extended, and give us thankful hearts to marvel at Your work. Send faithful laborers into Your fields to scatter Your seed here and abroad, that in due time a harvest may be reaped for Your glory. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, the great I AM, what You have spoken You will surely do. We implore You for the sake of Christ and Your many precious promises to bless and defend our homes, to make the efforts of parents fruitful in the teaching of their children, and to preserve them in the saving faith of Jesus. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Eternal Lord, Ruler of all, graciously regard those who have been set in positions of authority among us. Guide them by Your Spirit to be high in purpose, wise in counsel, firm in good resolution and unwavering in duty, that under them we may be governed quietly and peaceably. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, we are bold to ask for all things because You have given us Your Spirit as a guarantee. Hear us as we intercede in Jesus' name for those in every need. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, we groan under many burdens in this earthly tent and long to be clothed with Your eternal life, which will swallow up all mortal sorrow. Give good courage to Your servants to walk by faith and not sight, to mourn our dead in the hope of the resurrection, and to make it our aim to please You while here in the body, until at last we are at home with Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy Father, from Israel You have taken a tender sprig, Your chosen Messiah, Jesus, and planted Him on the mountain for our salvation. By His death on a tree, You have reversed the curse of sin and brought life again to dry, dusty souls. Do not let us despise Your Christ, His humility or His suffering, but bring us with all Your Christians into the shade of His eternal rest; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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 deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.

Dismissal

Christ is risen, just as he said.

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

