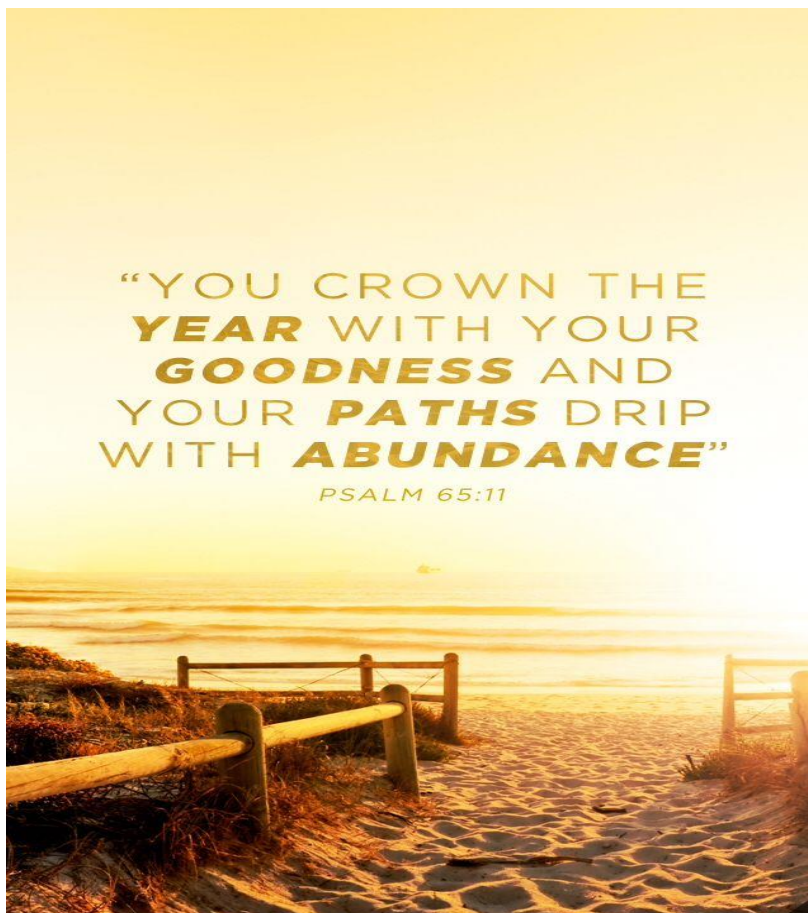


***The Lutheran Church of the Covenant***  
***“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”***



*Sixth Sunday after Pentecost*  
*July 12, 2020*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## Sixth 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.*

Prelude: Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song (*Hansen*)

Confession & Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we take time to recognize our shortcomings, while also remembering God's relentless grace.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting,  
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

**Amen!**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,  
**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.  
We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.  
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.  
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.  
We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.  
We sin in thought, word, and deed.  
By your grace, forgive us;  
through your love, renew us;  
and, as the Holy Spirit, lead us;  
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life.  
Amen!**

Beloved of God,  
by the radical abundance of divine mercy  
we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,  
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.  
Our sins are forgiven.  
Let us live now in hope.  
For hope does not disappoint,  
because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

Gathering Hymn *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil* (HANSON) [sing twice through] #512



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. 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.

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. As the 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!**

### First Lesson

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.*

<sup>10</sup>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

Psalm 65:9-13

<sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>**You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;  
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.**

<sup>11</sup>You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths overflow with plenty.

<sup>12</sup>**May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,  
and the hills be clothed with joy.**

<sup>13</sup>May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain;  
let them shout for joy and sing.

Second Lesson

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.*

<sup>1</sup>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!**

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.*

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, o Lord!**

<sup>1</sup>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."

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *You Satisfy the Hungry Heart* (WESTENDORF, KREUTZ)

#484

*Refrain*



You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.



Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.



- 1 As when the shep - herd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;
- 2 With joy - ful lips we sing to you our praise and grat - i - tude
- 3 Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ out - poured?
- 4 The mys - t'ry of your pres - ence, Lord, no mor - tal tongue can tell:
- 5 You give your - self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

*Refrain*



so when you call your fam - 'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - joi - ce.  
that you should count us wor - thy, Lord, to share this heav' n - ly food.  
Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare our one - ness in the Lord?  
whom all the world can - not con - tain comes in our hearts to dwell.  
to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.

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 into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, your word has been sown in many ways and places. We pray for missionaries and newly planted congregations around the world. Inspire us by the new life we have each day with our Risen Lord. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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. Empower us to sustainably use what you have given. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Universal God, we lift up all our local, state and federal leaders. Increase their desire for justice and equality. We, also, pray for our enemies. Bridge the chasms that divide us and guide authorities to a deep and lasting peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding God, care for all who are in need. For those who are doubting, renew faith. For those who are worrying, provide release. For those who are struggling, ease burdens. For those in fear, give hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**



Renewing God, revive your church in this place and throughout the world. Nourish and nurture the seeds you have planted, that we might grow as your disciples. Replace what has been depleted. Sustain our ministries and deepen relationships with the wider community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for all who have died and now rest eternally in your care. Comfort us in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen!**

Thanksgiving at the Table

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!**

Holy God,  
our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,  
in the harmonious world of your creation,  
the plants and animals,  
the seas and stars  
were whole and well in your praise.

When sin had scarred the world,  
you sent your Son to heal our ills  
and to form us again into one.

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.

Remembering, therefore,  
his acts of healing,  
his body given up,  
and his victory over death,  
we await that day when all the peoples of the earth  
will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

Holy Spirit, be immersed in this meal:  
as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,  
so let your church be gathered from the ends of the earth,  
that all may be fed with the Bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
both now and forever. **Amen!**

And now, gracious Father, as your precious Son has taught us, through the Holy Spirit we  
are forever bold to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

## Communion

Music Interlude Break Bread Together (*Organ*)

*(please use this time to meditate or pray for those dear to your heart)*

## Prayer after Communion

God of the welcome table,  
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness  
and have been united by your presence among us.  
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts  
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,  
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.

**Amen!**

## Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.  
God, the creator, ✠ Jesus, the Christ,  
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,  
bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen!**

Sending Hymn *Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty* (SCHMOLCK, WINKWORTH, NEANDER) #533



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,  
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;  
3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;  
4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;  
5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.  
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.  
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,  
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine  
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!  
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!  
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.  
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com - fort in all strife.  
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you!

**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude-Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil (*Hansen*)

## Praying Together

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, Steve Dobush, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Tom Juhasz, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr., Arlene Stoltz, Tim Susanek, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

### LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 7/5/2020: \$2039.00

A Thank Offering was given to Lutheran Church of the Covenant by: Andrea Lanzalaca

## *Lectionary Blog: Letting God Sweep Us Away*



I believe that God has a mission for us all. God wants us to move forward, to announce and then practice the advent of God's kingdom. We pray: "Let your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ...." I think God wants us to obey Jesus and follow in the footsteps of the early church. They proclaimed the good news, practiced radical and even dangerous hospitality, and stood in communal solidarity across racial and national boundaries. To depict God's mission of moving us forward, the Bible frequently uses images of a river of God's presence. A river isn't static, but it carries everything in and on it to a new place.

There are two especially famous descriptions of the river of God. The first is from a vision in Ezekiel 47 in which a river began to flow from the temple. The river became deeper as it flowed, without additional tributaries, and had the power to bring fresh life wherever it went. Even the famously saline Dead Sea was turned fresh, and all manner of water creatures and plants were able to grow in the formerly hostile environment. The other famous image is from Revelation 22. The river of life flows from God's own throne and waters the tree of life, accessible again for the first time since the expulsion from

Eden. In both of these images, water is pictured flowing from God's presence and bringing life wherever it goes. This week's lectionary passages continue the theme.

In Isaiah 55, the word of the Lord is compared to rain and snow, which fall and don't evaporate until they have watered the earth. After a long, dry summer in the mostly arid land of Israel, the rains from God are necessary for anything to grow, and for people and animals to have anything to eat. The seasonal rains usually fall around the pilgrimage festival of Sukkot. In ancient times, this was precisely when the priests poured out a water libation over the altar (M. *Sukkah* 5:5), and when Jesus proclaimed himself as the source of the river of living water (John 7:2, 37-38). God links the life-giving water to God's life-giving word, which also doesn't return without bringing forth a bounty of fresh growth and new life.

This week's psalm again conflates God's presence with life-giving water. The psalmist proclaims that God visits the earth and waters it (Psalm 65:9). The river of God has specifically been prepared to provide people with sustenance. This wasn't just a metaphor to ancient people who lived in a time when a drought could mean starvation (see the story of Joseph and his brothers). The rain that God sent was a matter of life and death. God wants the people to know that God's presence, through God's word, is equally a matter of life and death.

This brings us to the beloved, but dangerously familiar, tale of the sower. As I wrote in previous blogs, the parable of the sower relies on knowledge of Judean and, especially, Galilean terrace farming techniques. Jesus' teachings can lose their original meaning if we don't remember that his words were deeply contextualized to be understood by his hearers.

Put simply, in the flatland farming that most of us imagine, you would never have good, rocky and weedy soil along a path so close together that a broadcasting farmer would sow seeds among all four kinds in a single throw. Jesus must have been referring to farming in small terraced plots on hillsides. Rocky, weedy and good soil would have all been within a couple meters of the path upon which the farmer trod. But we must remember that in terrace farming, soil wasn't static but moved in response to the water provided by God.

As the rain falls on the hills, water washes the soil further and further down the terrace system, where the soil is deepest, and mostly free of rocks and weeds. Farmers would have recognized in Jesus' parable that the condition of the soil had *everything* to do with

how it responded to the living water falling upon it. Soil that refused to move with the water was stuck among the rocks or became trapped among the thorns and thistles that grew in less-tended areas along the terrace retaining walls. The moral of the parable is that we need to allow God's living water to move us to someplace where we can bear the most good fruit for the kingdom.

I believe that God's mission is to use the life-giving word to move us to attitudes and areas that force us to be productive in encouraging and supporting life for all our siblings—and indeed all of creation. How might God be calling you to a movement of heart or geography in order to love God and your neighbor?



*Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.*

*This, and other resources for the journey of faith, available at [LivingLutheran.org](http://LivingLutheran.org), as well as our own website: [covenantmaplehts.org](http://covenantmaplehts.org).*



*Please, continue to let us know how you think worship is going from our parking lot, including how you felt about Communion today. We hope to make the experience as spiritually nourishing as possible!*

# camping

C A M P E R V G H I C H H Z C R Z J S G U C K A  
H O J D M F L B N D P N H S E R O M S M R N T K  
B L I Y I A B J J X V C N V W E R U T A N M F T  
D R R P V I K U Y O A I V U E V R K C A P O O L  
G G W L Z M S Q C F T Q H W U L C T F B Y H L A  
C A M P F I R E E K I H O M J D S Q Q X F H S T  
Q Z K G P W L Z P S X B T J S D D G Y E E F T D  
W D A V C S X V E U R V D G K V W A F S F L A X  
A G Q R D B F P K N D B O G N I P M A C Q A E Y  
L L T R O B Y P A M D N G P R C G D P M X S G R  
K Q W G T N E T L G G C S J N A X Q D Y F H A J  
O S U E M A L Y G F D M B Y O B B D U I B L K G  
C X S R Z B L U H K A I V S O R E Y P B K I F V  
F A D W A C D Z G S I G I W M N E H N U G G O D  
H E K V P F S T A R S Y N N R R X S F O A H D N  
C D N U O R G P M A C U M S R F F H W Q Z T O J  
S Y E S Y O A H L U I L I A R T D S N E U V F C  
A B J X M W J N C Q E L J K B W G B T M I D L B  
A P R N U W C T Z V G V G V C X M A L Z S A S G  
U Y V E B P T R Y S H P H S C T N R E N X O A X  
I X V B K W K M R Y Y T F Z A E T R E E S U X C  
A P Y O U I G H S I Y L L J C B I K E R I D E P  
H P Z S P B D D J M S W O L L A M H S R A M J L  
X W E Q A P Y Z F O U T D O O R S J D Z Q G K J

sun	moon	stars	bike ride
camper	campfire	campground	camping
flashlight	hike	hotdogs	lake
marshmallows	nature	outdoors	s'mores
tent	trail	trees	walk