

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 14, 2020

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER



PRELUDE O Holy Spirit, Enter In Setting: Keith Kolander

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN #913 O Holy Spirit, Enter In

- 1 O Holy Spirit, enter in,
And in our hearts Your work begin,
Your dwelling place now make us.
Sun of the soul, O Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine,
To joy and gladness wake us
That we may be
Truly living,
To You giving
Prayer unceasing
And in love be still increasing.
- 2 Give to Your Word impressive pow'r,
That in our hearts from this good hour
As fire it may be glowing,
That in true Christian unity
We faithful witnesses may be,
Your glory ever showing.
Hear us, cheer us
By Your teaching;
Let our preaching
And our labor
Praise You, Lord, and serve our neighbor.
- 3 O mighty Rock, O Source of life,
Let Your dear Word, in doubt and strife,
In us be strongly burning
That we be faithful unto death
And live in love and holy faith,
From You true wisdom learning.
Your grace and peace
On us shower;
By Your power
Christ confessing,
Let us see our Savior's blessing.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the holy Christian church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

HYMN OF PRAISE

**To you on high be glory and peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father; Your holy name, we sing –
Our thanks for Your great glory, Lord God our heavenly King.**

**To you, O sole begotten, the Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior, You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus; receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in power are seated at God's right hand on high.**

**For You alone are holy; You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever, be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory. "Amen!" our glad reply.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Almighty, eternal God,

in the Word of Your apostles and prophets You have proclaimed to us Your saving will. Grant us faith to believe Your promises that we may receive eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



FIRST LESSON Exodus 19:2–8

They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. (ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

SECOND LESSON Romans 5:6–15

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled,

shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 9:35—10:8

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 9th and 10th chapters.

Glory to You, O Lord.

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. (ESV)

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON

Sermon theme: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." Matthew 9:37

Today God calls us to consider the blessings of His harvest and the need for workers.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ:

At my old house, I had a nice place in the back yard for a vegetable garden. Most years I would plant a few vegetables, try to keep up with the weeding and watering as best I could, and hope for a nice harvest. Some years I was more ambitious than others. Some years the harvest was better than others. The garden never really saved me much money and the vegetables weren't always tastier than what I could buy at the store, but I liked the idea of having a garden. I think it helped me appreciate the miracle of life that God brings about through seed, water, earth and sun. Or maybe it just seemed like the thing to do... because I'm from Iowa!

At my current house there isn't much room for a garden. But this year, with more time at home, and because I had some old decking boards that needed to come out, I built a little planter. In it I put a tomato plant, a green pepper plant, and some green beans. They're all growing nicely at the moment, and I hope to have a good harvest in due time. It's only a small garden. But I'm still kind of excited about it.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus says, "the harvest is plentiful." Jesus is talking about people, of course. Not vegetables. But beyond that, what exactly does Jesus mean? Who are the people of the harvest? How plentiful is this harvest? What does it mean to bring in this harvest? Who are the workers who will bring in the harvest, and how are they to be working? Lots of questions arise from this simple metaphor.

In addressing these questions, we should first note that when Jesus said, "the harvest is plentiful," he was referring to the great crowds of people that were gathered around him. We recall that at this point in his ministry Jesus was drawing very large crowds, often numbering thousands of people. Some of these people came to hear him preach. Others came because they heard he could heal. Some were simply curious. And some had made the commitment to learn from him, as a disciple.

The idea of harvesting such a great crowd of people might make it sound like Jesus was looking to personally benefit or profit from them. After all, that's what's going on when we harvest. We're either looking for the fresh taste of food in our mouths or the nice feel of money in our pockets.

But this is not what Jesus means. The text tells us that when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. He noticed that they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus simply wanted to help them.

When Jesus talks about "the harvest," he is referring to those who come to him seeking help. This means those first crowds mentioned in our text. And it also means those who come to him today. People like you and me – those who are in church on Sunday, searching the Scriptures and calling out to him in prayer.

Jesus has compassion on those who come to him. He knows of their need and is ready and able to help.

And yet, Jesus' compassion is too great to be limited to just these. When Jesus is talking about the harvest, he is also talking about others. His compassion is directed not only at those who *seek* help from him, but even more basically, those who *need* help from him. In other words, Jesus is referring to everyone when he speaks about the harvest.

We know this because Jesus sends out workers into the harvest fields. Jesus tells his workers to go to every home, not just those who have shown some interest. In our text today Jesus is only sending them to the "lost sheep of Israel." But he would soon send them to the ends of the earth.

Jesus has compassion on everyone. More than that, he sees potential in everyone. Not everyone may be ready to be harvested now, but they may someday.

Jesus knows that people are “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” He knows that they are beaten down by the hurtful words and actions of others. He knows that they are tempted and discouraged. And he knows that the voices of greed, of anger, of evil and despair are often the loudest voices in the community - and that this wears on everyone.

He knows, too, that people struggle with their own sin. He knows that it is their own greed or anger or despair that also contributes to their problems.

Jesus sees all of God’s struggling people as the harvest. And in his compassion, he doesn’t want anyone to stay in their struggle. He wants them to be harvested.

Which, of course, leads to another question. What does it mean for people to be harvested?

By the nature of the word, harvesting implies that something is cut off from its root and taken to another place. When we are harvested by God, we are cut off from our place of sinful struggle and taken to a place of goodness and safety. To be harvested by God is the same as being saved.

Jesus harvests us when he delivers us from the powers of darkness and brings us into God’s light. Jesus harvests us when he frees us from our sinful nature and connects us to God. Jesus harvests us when he forgives our sin and brings us into his kingdom.

Most uses of the harvest metaphor in the Scriptures refer to the coming time of judgment. In Matthew’s Gospel, a few chapters after our text (in chap.13), Jesus tells a parable about good plants growing up among weeds. In that parable, he explains that “the harvest is the end of the age.” Revelation 14, in the section about the grapes of wrath, also pictures the end of the age as a harvest, as does a short parable of Jesus recorded in Mark 4. Jesus’ words in today’s text may have that final judgment in mind since there is an urgency in receiving his help. And those that don’t receive help are on a path to destruction. But here the metaphor is mostly about the work to be done, and the need for workers. Bringing in a harvest takes a lot of work.

When a farmer reaps his harvest, he will often put his crop in a storage unit of some kind— a barn or a silo. The fruits of my little garden will probably fit nicely in a few kitchen containers. In God’s Kingdom, those who are harvested are to be placed in the Church. The Church is God’s place of safe keeping. Those who belong to God belong in the Church.

God does the saving – and thus God does the harvesting. But he also calls people to help in this work, especially the work of helping others into the church.

This can be difficult work. And the metaphor reminds us of this. Think of the effort required to cut grain with a hand-held instrument like a scythe or sickle. And think about what’s being done. People are being cut from their roots – those of their sinful nature. People don’t always like this. They don’t like the intrusion on their life. They don’t like the change. They don’t like the loss of control. But that’s what conversion to a life in Christ brings.

And yet, at the same time, converting to a life in Christ is also about a person realizing their natural purpose. It is about becoming useful and helpful to others – one who can feed and sustain others, like

grain (to again use the metaphor). And even more, it is about becoming attached to our true root— God almighty, who has created us.

This attachment happens when people are reconciled to God. And this reconciliation is done for us by Jesus, our Savior, who paid the price for our sin when he died on the cross.

When we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are saved from our sin, and brought into the harvest. This is the greatest help we could ever receive. It's a help which will sustain us. For all of our days. Through the final harvest and into the new creation.

Jesus said: "the harvest is plentiful." Then he goes on to say: "but the workers are few." These are words of challenge. God needs more workers. And we are to hear the call.

We must not think that the Church is just a place of storage for the grain that has been gathered, and that we are simply to exist in the Church until shipped off to heaven someday. God has in mind much more for us. We in the church are to realize our full calling as disciples of Jesus. We are to follow him through our listening and learning, and be sent by him, as workers, in the kingdom.

As workers in the kingdom, we are to give of our time freely and generously. Newer translations of the concluding verses of today's text often emphasize that those first apostles of Jesus were not to work for pay. That's probably correct. But I still think the sense of the verse is best captured by the old King James Version, which says, "freely you have received; freely give." That's a translation which speaks to each of us.

Today's world needs workers who will give freely. We need harvesters who will work creatively and without fear. We need disciples of Jesus who will work joyfully, reflecting their own freedom from sin. We need workers who will mirror the compassion of their Lord, Jesus Christ.

When today's farmers harvest their crops, they will use some amazing machinery to accomplish their task. Many of us have marveled at the great combines which move swiftly and efficiently through a field of ripe grain. But have you noticed, that when a combine has done its work and gathered its crop, there are yet stalks of grain standing in the corners of the field where the machine could not reach? This can remind us that in God's world, pastors and teachers and missionaries can reach many people with the Gospel, but there are some people in the corners of our society beyond their reach. There are corners of the field where only you can go and reap this harvest for Christ.

Let us pray that the Lord would send out workers into his fields. Let us pray that God would indeed bring in a great harvest. And let us each consider what we can do to be the answer to these prayers. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

- 1 **God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.**
- 2 **Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All then who trust in Him alone
Are built on this chief cornerstone.**
- 3 **God would not have the sinner die;
His Son with saving grace is nigh;
His Spirit in the Word declares
How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.**
- 4 **Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood,
Your Baptism grants the highest good.**
- 5 **If you are sick, if death is near,
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.**
- 6 **Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!**

Text (sts. 1–6) and Music: Public domain

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING God Loved the World So That He Gave Setting: Wayne L. Wold

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Brief silence

For the Church and her witness of hope to the world, that in every city, village and home, the welcoming voice of the Lord may be heard, and that the hope of Christ would bring healing to our community, our nation, and our world, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who labor in God's fields, that they be strengthened, and that the Lord would raise up many more laborers for His vineyard, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our Synod and Matthew, its president; for our District, and John, our District President, for our congregation and our pastor(s), and for the resources to accomplish what the Lord has given us to do, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all of us who hunger and thirst for the precious food of heaven, that we would be sustained and nourished by the Lord's love and forgiveness until we can feast with Him again, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who live under the flag of our nation, for all who govern, for renewal of justice for every person, and for dialog that heals the wounds between races, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor and hungry, the homeless, the unemployed and those in prison, that the Lord would show His love and mercy to them, and that we may help to relieve their suffering and want, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick, that the Lord would grant them healing; for the wounded in spirit, that the Lord would make them whole; for the grieving and the dying, that the Lord would comfort them; for all who are affected by the pandemic; and for those whom we now name _____], let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our grateful remembrance of all who have died in faith, and for the saints who have shone light upon us, especially Elijah and Jeremiah, that in the fullness of time the Lord may bring us with them into His everlasting presence where we will join the angels in heavenly song, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

O blessed Lord, through Moses You called Your people into covenant, and from them You delivered up Your own Son to be Savior of all. Help us to live as Your own people, doing the good works for which we were created, and praying with confidence the petitions and supplications of our hearts; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE 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.**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.
The Lord make His face shine on us
and be gracious to us.
The Lord look upon us with favor and ✠ give us peace.

SENDING HYMN #918 Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer

- 1 **Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.**
- 2 **Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield;
Be Thou still my strength and shield.**
- 3 **When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee;
I will ever give to Thee.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer* Setting: Paul Manz

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Four from Lutheran Service Book © 2006 Concordia Publishing House.
Reprinted with permission.

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2018 Concordia Publishing House.