



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
June 13, 2021

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
A Place for Everyone . . .

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Doug Nelson, Presiding



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The *congregation*, or participants, *respond* with the lines in **bold type**.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

The mustard seed becomes a great shrub that shelters the birds, recalling ancient images of the tree of life. We'd expect a cedar or a sequoia, but Jesus finds the power of God better imaged in a tiny, no-account seed. It's not the way we expect divine activity to look. Yet the tree of life is here, in the cross around which we gather, the tree into which we are grafted through baptism, the true vine that nourishes us with its fruit in the cup we share. It may not appear all that impressive, but while nobody's looking it grows with a power beyond our understanding.

THE GATHERING

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, **+** one God, the God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy.

C Amen.

P Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P God, our provider,

C help us. It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again to you. Where else can we turn? Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world. Amen.

P Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, ✝ the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

C Amen.

GATHERING HYMN:

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
(green hymnal #499)

GREETING

P From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be with you all.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. 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.

C Amen

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Tree imagery is used in a messianic prophecy to tell how the LORD will choose someone from Judah's royal family (the cedar tree) to reign over all creation. This tree will be planted on Mount Zion, the location of the holy temple.

²²Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one
from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it
on a high and lofty mountain.

²³On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;
in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴All the trees of the field shall know
that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

L This is the word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15

L/C by whole verse

¹It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name, O Most High;

²**to herald your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night;**

³on the psaltery, and on the lyre, and to the melody of the harp.

⁴**For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD; and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.**

¹²The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

¹³**Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God;**

¹⁴they shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be green and succulent;

¹⁵**that they may show how upright the LORD is, my rock, in whom there is no injustice.**

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:6-17

Paul encourages believers to live by faith and not by sight. We do not consider Jesus from a human perspective but through the eyes of faith, believing he died for all and was raised. All who are in Christ are now in God's new creation.

⁶So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I

hope that we are also well known to your consciences. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

L This is the word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

GOSPEL ANNOUNCEMENT

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 4th chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Mark 4:26-34

Jesus frequently uses parables to teach ordinary people as they are able to hear and understand. Images of sowing and growing show the vitality of God's kingdom.

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and would sleep and rise night

and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet 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.”

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

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

SERMON: DOUG NELSON

(Silence for a time of reflection)

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Now We Join in Celebration*
(green hymnal #203)

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

℣ Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

℣ Holy God, you plant the seeds of faith in every nation. Enliven your church, so that the good news of your grace may root and grow throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy,

☩ hear our prayer.

℣ Creator, even the trees, shrubs, and flowers delight in your goodness. From the depths of the soil to the highest mountain, bring forth new plants. Restore growth to places suffering drought. Lord, in your mercy,

☩ hear our prayer.

Ⓔ Judge of nations, we pray for our leaders and those in power. Grant them the ability to regard those under their charge with humility, dedicating their lives in service to others. Lord, in your mercy,

Ⓒ **hear our prayer.**

Ⓔ Divine comforter, you show compassion to those in need and provide relief to those who call on you (*especially*). Bless all who suffer, especially people trapped in cycles of poverty and homelessness. Lord, in your mercy,

Ⓒ **hear our prayer.**

Ⓔ Sovereign God, this house of worship belongs to you. We give thanks and pray for our church musician. We dedicate to you the joyful noise that comes from this place; the cries of children, the melody of voice and instruments, and the songs from our hearts. Lord, in your mercy,

Ⓒ **hear our prayer.**

Ⓔ Eternal God, we give thanks for our ancestors in the faith who are now at home with you. We look forward to that day when we are reunited in your new creation. Lord, in your mercy,

Ⓒ **hear our prayer.**

Ⓔ We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

Ⓒ **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE COMMUNION MEAL

(The elements have been blessed by Pastor Molly)

THE OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

☒ Let us pray. Jesus, Bread of life, you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty. Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world.

☑ **Amen.**

MEAL

In the scriptures, we hear the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remember the words that tell us "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.'"

We are given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now to us through this blessed bread of life and cup of blessing our Lord comes so that we may be strengthened through our participation in the Body of Christ.

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us:

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.
Come!

The elements were given as you entered.

P The body of Christ given for you.

C Amen.

P The blood of Christ shed for you.

C Amen.

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

C Amen.

THE LITURGY OF SENDING FOR SERVICE

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

☞ Let us pray. Jesus, Bread of life, we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray.

☞ Amen.

BLESSING

☞ The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, ✠ be upon you now and forever.

☞ Amen.

DISMISSAL

☞ Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

☞ Thanks be to God. We will!

POSTLUDE

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