

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service of the Word

First Lutheran Church, Lynn, MA

July 12, 2020



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.

Welcome to worship!

Yes, *this is worship!* It is not the way any of us *want* it to be, but God is alive and present in this virtual gathering. God's work will still speak to us through the Holy Spirit, and we are still the Body of Christ, joined together in a fellowship of love, even if it is not in person.

Create a sacred space in your home.

Light a candle. Pour yourself a warm beverage. Welcome the presence of God into your dwelling. Set aside this time for worship as if you were in church. Put away the cell phone (unless you are watching on your cell phone!) Adopt a posture of prayer that works for you.

We will get through this.

This is temporary. This is not the "new normal." This may last several weeks, but we will be back together soon. We are blessed to be living in a time with technology that allows us to gather in this way. For that we can rejoice!

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Andante and Allegro
G.F. Handel

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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.

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.**
**By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us;
and in your Spirit, lead us;**
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

The minister announces God's forgiveness, to which the assembly responds:
Amen.

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



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.



GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

In the summer, our liturgy comes from Now the Feast and Celebration, a contemporary and easily singable setting by Marty Haugen.

This canticle draws from the imagery of God's victory over sin and death in the book of Revelation.



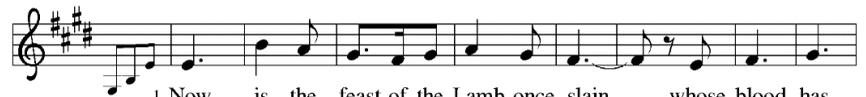
Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion



sings for joy to the God of life and love and free-dom;



praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!



1 Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has



freed and u - nit-ed us to be one great peo-ple of God.



2 Pow - er and rich-es, wis-dom and might, all hon - or and



glo - ry to Christ for - ev - er.



3 For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo-ple of



God; to make all things new.

God speaks to us in scripture readings, preaching, and song

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.

PSALM

Psalm 65

The psalms were the original prayer book of God's people and capture the full gamut of human emotion.

The cantors sing the refrain, which is repeated by the assembly. The choir sings the verses.

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, 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.

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. 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.

The seed that falls on good ground will
yield a fruit - ful har - vest, will
yield a fruit - ful har - vest.

1. You visit the earth, give it water; you fill it with riches. God's ever-flowing river brims over to prepare the grain.
2. And thus you provide for the earth; you drench its furrows; you level it, soften it with showers; you bless its growth.
3. You crown the year with your bounty. Abundance flows in your pathways; in pastures of the desert it flows. The hills are girded with growth.
4. The meadows clothed with flocks. The valleys are decked with wheat. They shout for joy; yes, they sing, yes, they 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.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 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, 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. 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. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 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, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

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. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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 ACCLAMATION

We stand to welcome Christ, the living word of God, in the gospel reading.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 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. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

Hear then the parable of the sower. 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. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 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. 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. 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast



1 Al-might - y God, your word is cast like seed in - to the ground;
2 Let not the sly sa - tan - ic foe this ho - ly seed re - move,
3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares the ris - ing plant de - stroy,
4 So when the pre - cious seed is sown, life - giv - ing grace be - stow,



now let the dew of heav'n de - scend and righ - teous fruits a - bound.
but give it root in ev - 'ry heart to bring forth fruits of love.
but let it yield a hun - dred - fold the fruits of peace and joy.
that all whose souls the truth re - ceive its sav - ing pow'r may know.

APOSTLES CREED

The word "creed" comes from the Latin credo which simply means "I believe."

By professing our faith with these ecumenical words, we are one with Christians all around the world, no matter what else might divide us.

With the whole church let us confess our faith:

**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.**

After each petition:

O God, rain down your mercy on us:
your mercy is everlasting.

**PRAYERS OF
INTERCESSION and
THE LORD'S
PRAYER**

PEACE

OFFERTORY

*You are invited to
make your offering
online at
www.flc-lynn.org/give
or by mail. Please
continue to give during
this time to support the
ongoing ministry of our
congregation.*

The Narrow Way
K. Lee Scott

Be near me, Lord, where're I go; teach me what you would have me do;
Direct whate'er I think or say; and lead me in the narrow way.
Prevent me, lest I harbor pride, lest I in my own strength confide;
Show me my weakness, let me see I have my pow'r my all in thee.
Assist and teach me how to pray; incline my nature to obey;
What you abhor, oh, let me flee, and only love what pleases thee.
Be near me, Lord, where're I go; teach me what you would have me do;
Direct whate'er I think or say; and lead me in the narrow way.



SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission for the world

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

God Whose Farm Is All Creation



1 God, whose farm is all cre - a - tion, take the grat - i -
2 Take our plow - ing, seed - ing, reap - ing, hopes and fears of
3 All our la - bor, all our watch - ing, all our cal - en -



tude we give; take the fin - est of our har - vest,
sun and rain, all our think - ing, plan - ning, wait - ing,
dar of care in these crops of your cre - a - tion,



crops we grow that we may live.
rip - ened in this fruit and grain.
take, O God: they are our prayer.

DISMISSAL

Be at peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Psalm XIX

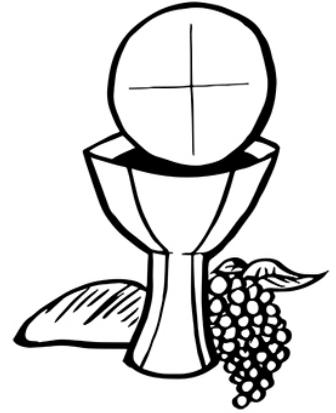
Benedetto Marcello

For those who desire it, the service continues with Holy Communion outdoors at church at 12:00 Noon. Please read the details on the next page on how to participate!

Starting today – 12:00 PM

Outdoor Holy Communion and Fellowship

Many of you (thank you!) took part in a recent survey around your comfort level in returning to some sort of in-person worship gathering, bearing in mind that any such gathering would not look or feel exactly as it did before, at least for the time being. Restrictions on where and how we gather will remain in place so long as this virus is part of our reality. About 2/3 of you indicated a desire to have in-person worship, even with those restrictions, while about 1/3 are more comfortable continuing to worship from home. There are also some of you who very much want to come back to church, but are not able to because of age or underlying health conditions.



Our goal as church leaders is to make worship available to everyone, whether we are gathered physically or virtually. Because of the progress being made in Massachusetts with regard to the coronavirus, and with the commonwealth now in Phase 3 of re-opening, we will begin offering an opportunity to gather outdoors for worship beginning today.

Our online Service of the Word will continue unchanged. All of you are invited to participate in this service on YouTube on Sunday morning. Then, at 12:00 Noon, you are invited to come to the fenced-in outdoor area near the driveway at church for the Holy Communion liturgy lasting about 15 minutes. You should bring your own lawn chair for this service, and space yourself at least six feet from other households. You must also wear a mask or face covering at all times, except when receiving communion. Special precautions will be in place for a safer preparation and distribution of the bread and cup, including only a single set of gloved hands coming into contact with them. After the service, you will be able to enjoy fellowship time with the others gathered, again remaining outside and maintaining physical distance of six feet.

We ask that you sign up at www.flc-lynn.org/gather you plan to attend this service – both as a way of ensuring a safe crowd size, and for the purpose of contact tracing in the event that anyone does become sick.

And as always, if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, have been in contact with someone who has in the last 14 days, or if you yourself are at a greater risk for complications, you are urged to stay home for the safety of your church family.

We hope that this temporary solution will help alleviate two of the most urgent needs of the congregation right now: to see each other in person, and to receive communion, while also allowing those who cannot physically gather to still participate online.

Music notes

The prelude for today was written by G. F. Handel (1685 – 1759), one of the preeminent composers of the Baroque Period (1600 – 1750). Though Handel is most often associated with English music, he was born in Germany and had professional positions in Germany and Italy before settling in England in 1712. The two pieces that make up the prelude are both movements from a larger concerto, and these movements are often simply named after the tempo indication, in this case, Andante (literally “To Go”, a moderately slow tempo related to walking), and Allegro (literally “Lively”, a quick tempo). The postlude was originally written by Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739) for choir accompanied with various instruments and was later arranged for organ by an unknown composer. In our modern culture, this sort of “borrowing” and rearranging would be considered a violation of copyright law if done without the original composer’s consent. However, during the Baroque era of music (when both of these composers were active), rather than “stealing”, it was considered quite a compliment to the original composer, implying that the arranger thought highly enough of the music that it was worth their time to adapt to their own individual needs.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

280 Broadway, Lynn, MA 01904

Church: 781-598-0481 Parsonage: 781-584-6631

<http://www.flc-lynn.org> | [facebook.com/flclynn](https://www.facebook.com/flclynn)

The Rev. Jon Niketh, *Pastor*

David Greatrix, *Director of Music Ministry*

Jack King and Patrice Cunningham, *Sextons*

Karin Butterworth, *Council President*

pastor@flclynn.org

music@flclynn.org

pjfamily5@verizon.net

karinbutterworth1@gmail.com



***We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation,
welcoming and serving all people.***

Liturgical material from Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under OneLicense Annual License #A-734385. New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.