

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 GUESTS AND VISITORS! We are glad you could join us for worship today. We hope that you are blessed by the Word and Sacraments that we share. We encourage you to participate as fully as you can. The screen in front will guide you. If desired, musical notation can be found as noted in the outline below. The “#” indicates hymn numbers in red *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal, and “SB” indicate page numbers in the “Song Book” pamphlet. The vertical line in the left margin indicates when we stand as we are able.

HOLY COMMUNION WITH SAINT JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

“It is taught that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper and are distributed and received there” (Augsburg Confession, Article X). “A person who has faith in these words, ‘given for you’ and ‘shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,’ is really worthy and well prepared.” “Forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament” (The Small Catechism, Part VI). “This church practices Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcomed to Communion”

(The Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 50)*

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Holy Communion, Setting Four

Accompanist: Megan Rebout

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- Confession and Forgiveness
- # 533 Gathering Song *Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty* 🎵
- p. 147 Greeting
- p. 147 Kyrie
- p. 150 Prayer of the Day

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

- p. 151 First Reading **Isaiah 55:10-13**

¹⁰For 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,

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giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so 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. ¹²For 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. ¹³Instead 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.

— **Psalmody Psalm 65:1-14**

¹You are to be praised, O God, in Zion;
to you shall vows be performed in Jerusalem.

²**To you that hear prayer shall all flesh come,
because of their transgressions.**

³Our sins are stronger than we are,
but you will blot them out.

⁴**Happy are they whom you choose
and draw to your courts to dwell there!
They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house,
by the holiness of your temple.**

⁵Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness,
O God of our salvation,
O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away.

⁶**You make fast the mountains by your power;
they are girded about with might.**

⁷You still the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

⁸**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth
will tremble at your marvelous signs;
you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous;
the river of God is full of water.

¹⁰**You prepare the grain,
for so you provide for the earth.**

¹¹You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

¹²**You crown the year with your goodness,
and your paths over-flow with plenty.**

¹³May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,
and the hills be clothed with joy.

¹⁴**May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain;
let them shout for joy and sing.**

p. 151 Second Reading Romans 8:1-11

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law

of sin and of death. ³For 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, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For 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. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For 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, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But 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. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If 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.

— **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia. The word is very near to you;

it is in your mouth and in your heart. Alleluia.

p. 151 GospelMatthew 13:1-9, 18-23

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!"

¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When 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. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet 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. ²²As 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. ²³But 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."

— **Sermon**

516 Hymn of the Day *Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast* 🎵

p. 152	Peace
p. 105	Apostles' Creed
p. 152	Prayers of Intercession
—	Offering, Offering Prayer, & Psalm (<i>116:12, 17, 13-14, 19</i>)
p. 152	Great Thanksgiving – Dialogue & Preface
p. 153	Sanctus <i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i> 🎵
—	Thanksgiving at the Table
p. 154	Lord's Prayer
—	Invitation to Communion
p. 154	Communion Song <i>Lamb of God</i> 🎵
—	Communion Distribution
—	Post-Communion Canticle (<i>Lk. 2:29-32</i>)
p. 155	Prayer after Communion
p. 155	Blessing
—	Ministry Opportunities & Announcements
# 545	Sending Song <i>Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing</i> 🎵
p. 155	Dismissal

Taking Root

Jesus makes it clear that merely speaking or receiving the good news of the kingdom of God is not always sufficient. Through preaching, Bible study, and worship God's word is planted in our hearts. But many things can get in the way of the word taking root, growing, and producing fruit.

The church is often tempted to do whatever it takes to bring in as many people, and as quickly, as possible for the sake of increasing numbers. This is sometimes done through shallowness: appealing to popular trends, preaching an easy message that requires no repentance or sacrifice, or depending on the charisma of the messenger more than the substance of the message.

In his parable of the sowing of seeds, Jesus emphasizes that it takes understanding and depth for God's word to take root, to endure struggles, and to be sustained long enough to bear fruit. Shallowness only makes room for a quick growth that doesn't last.

In the church, what makes for depth that allows God's word to take root and last in our lives? Often it means connecting God's word to the deep, personal needs we bring. Is the Bible a book about things that happened a long time ago, or does it speak God's word for our lives today? Do we listen only to the parts of God's word that sound easy and make us feel good, or do we wrestle with messages of repentance and calls to seek justice?

Martin Luther taught the church that God's word comes to us as law and gospel. We don't get to choose which one we want to hear. We always get both. Both knowing we need God's mercy and hearing that God's mercy is a gift for us through Christ bring God's word deep into our hearts, where it takes root and lives. This is what it means to understand God's word with depth.

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