



The seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how...

THE 4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JUNE 16, 2024

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4660 West 94th Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453

(708) 423-1040
Pastor John Moeller

www.stpauloaklawn.org
Director of Music Ruth Sievers

As We Gather

Many of Jesus' parables have to do with agriculture, from the parable of the sower to the comparison of the Kingdom of God with a mustard seed. There are so many little details that apply to our lives, but today our focus is on the seed and the mystery of how it grows. What brings the seed from planting to harvest is God's provision, His goodness, and His power – the same things that cause growth in His kingdom. In both cases, it is in the domain of faith that trusts what the eye does not see and the mind can not comprehend. At the end of it all is the harvest, when God will bring into His storehouse all the fruits of His seed that have been planted in good soil. Our blissful ignorance of this process should never deprive us of the joy of its outcome!

Prelude

"Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices"

H. Metzger

Opening Hymn

"Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices"

#811, sts. 1 – 4

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Oh, that I had a thousand voices
To praise my God with thousand tongues!
My heart, which in the Lord rejoices,
Would then proclaim in grateful songs
To all, wherever I might be,
What great things God has done for me. | 3 You forest leaves so green and tender
That dance for joy in summer air,
You meadow grasses, bright and slender,
You flow'rs so fragrant and so fair,
You live to show God's praise alone.
Join me to make His glory known. |
| 2 O all you pow'rs that He implanted,
Arise, keep silence now no more;
Put forth the strength that God has granted!
Your noblest work is to adore.
O soul and body, join to raise
With heartfelt joy our Maker's praise. | 4 All creatures that have breath and motion,
That throng the earth, the sea, the sky,
Come, share with me my heart's devotion,
Help me to sing God's praises high.
My utmost pow'rs can never quite
Declare the wonders of His might. |

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Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Confession and Absolution

Psalm 1:5–6

P The wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

C for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

We pause in silence to remember our sins before our Heavenly Father...

P O God our Father, since You have set forth the way of life for us in Your beloved Son, we confess with shame our slowness to learn of Him, our failure to follow Him, and our reluctance to bear the cross.

C Have mercy on us and forgive us, O Lord.

P Forgive us for the poverty of our worship, our neglect of fellowship and of the Means of Grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our evasion of responsibility in Your service, and our imperfect stewardship of Your gifts.

C Have mercy on us and forgive us, O God.

P Forgive us that so little of Your love has reached others through us, that we have been thoughtless in our judgments, hasty in condemnation, grudging in forgiveness, slow to seek reconciliation, and unwilling to help our neighbors as we ought.

C **Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your steadfast love. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.**

P Upon this your confession and by the command of our Lord, I, a called and ordained servant of Christ, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

C **Amen.**

✠ Word ✠

Psalm

Psalm 1; antiphon vs. 1

P Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

C **his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.**

P He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,

C **its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.**

P The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

C **Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;**

P for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

C **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.**

**Blessèd is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.**

Prayer of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray...

Old Testament Reading

✠ God's Promise of Renewal ✠

Ezekiel 17:22-24

²²Thus says the Lord GOD: "I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. ²³On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar. And under it will dwell every kind of bird; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest.

²⁴And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it."

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

✠ Our Heavenly Dwelling ✠

2 Corinthians 5:1 – 10

¹We know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶So we are always of good courage. 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 are of good courage, 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 we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel

✠ The Parable of the Growing Seed ✠

Mark 4:26-34

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

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." ³⁰And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?"

³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out 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 without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

✠ Confession of Faith ✠

The 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.

Sermon Hymn

“Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast”

#577

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Almighty God, Your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound. | 3 Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold
The fruits of peace and joy. |
| 2 Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love. | 4 So when the precious seed is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow
That all whose souls the truth receive
Its saving pow'r may know. |

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Sermon

Prayer of the Church

Offering—*may be left in the offering plates near the doors as you leave. Offerings may also be dropped off at the office or mailed, and on-line giving is available to everyone on our website at www.stpauloaklawn.org. For information about regular electronic giving, please call the church office.*

Offertory Meditation

A word about the Sacrament of the Altar...

We believe Jesus' own words that the bread and wine we receive in Holy Communion are indeed His true Body and Blood and not just a representation of them. We also acknowledge St. Paul's instruction to the Church at Corinth that it is harmful for anyone to receive the Sacrament without recognizing the real presence of His Body and Blood. Because of this, in Christian love we ask anyone who does not understand these truths to please refrain from receiving the Sacrament until you've spoken with the pastor. (*Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-30*)

✠ The Sacrament of the Altar ✠

Preface

- P** The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**
P Lift up your hearts.
C **We lift them to the Lord.**
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Our Lord

Proclamation of Christ

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Lord, our God, we rejoice to stand before You...

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9–13

P As our Savior has taught us, so we are bold to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven...**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **Amen.**

✠ Distribution of the Sacrament ✠

"Just as I Am, without One Plea"

#570

1 Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2 Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3 Just as I am, though tossed about
With many_a conflict, many_a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6 Just as I am; Thy love unknown
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

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"Children of the Heavenly Father"

#725

1 Children of the heav'nly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.

3 Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth,
And their sorrows all He knoweth.

2 God His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them.

4 Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy.

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Hymn**“For the Fruits of His Creation”**

#894

1 For the fruits of His creation,
Thanks be to God.
For His gifts to ev’ry nation,
Thanks be to God.

For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
Silent growth while we are sleeping,
Future needs in earth’s safekeeping,
Thanks be to God.

2 In the just reward of labor,
God’s will is done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God’s will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring
For the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing,
God’s will is done.

3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
Thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
Thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
For the truths that still confound us,
Most of all, that love has found us,
Thanks be to God.

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Communion Blessing

P The true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

Closing Prayer**Benediction****Closing Hymn****“On What Has Now Been Sown”**

#921

1 On what has now been sown
Thy blessing, Lord, bestow;
The pow’r is Thine alone
To make it sprout and grow.
Do Thou in grace the harvest raise,
And Thou alone shalt have the praise!

2 To Thee our wants are known,
From Thee are all our pow’rs;
Accept what is Thine own

And pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive,
And to Thy Word a blessing give.

3 O grant that each of us,
Now met before Thee here,
May meet together thus
When Thou and Thine appear
And follow Thee to heav’n, our home.
E’en so, amen, Lord Jesus, come!

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Postlude**“Postlude in C Major”**

G. Handel



The mustard seed, ...the smallest of all seeds...



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANKS

Organist: Ruth Sievers

Vocalists: Lori Safstrom & Susan Volk

Lector: Audrey Mitchell

Altar Care: Sunday: Sue Lilja; Wednesday: Denise Murray

Elders on Duty: John Lilja, Kevin Kenealy, Dave Kandel

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Announcements & Notes:

The June – July “Letter of St. Paul,” our newsletter, is available on the counters in the narthex and wings this morning, and has also been sent by email and is on our website.

Wednesday evening worship services are returning to the air-conditioned St. Timothy Room for the summer months starting **THIS Wednesday, June 19th**. Please enter through the outside Timothy Room door directly into the worship area. Services begin at 6 p.m.

The Friday evening Bible Study, led by Curtis Simonson, resumes **THIS Friday, June 21st**, in the Timothy room at 6:30 p.m., and of course our Sunday morning Bible Study continues each week after this service. All are welcome!

Something has been missing! We have not welcomed our new members and visitors since before COVID began, so we are going to do just that two weeks from today on June 30th right after our Sunday service. Many of you already feel like old friends, but let’s make it official with a nice reception in the Timothy Room, starting at about 10:15. The whole congregation is invited, so everyone come and make a new friend!

A Summer Bereavement Support Group, hosted by OSF Little Company of Mary Hospice, will be held from 1 - 3 p.m. at the Chicago Ridge Public Library, 10400 Oxford Ave. in Chicago Ridge on 6 consecutive Wednesdays from July 10th through August 14th. To register, please call Jessica at 708-229-6913.

The St. Paul Adult Choir is welcoming additional members to sing with them on July 14th for Pastor John's retirement service. Rehearsals will be held in the Timothy Room on Wednesdays - June 26, July 3, and July 10 - at 7:00 p.m. immediately following the Wednesday evening church service. See Ruth Sievers for more information.

Tickets for Pastor John's retirement luncheon and reception on July 14th are available both before and after services at the table in the narthex - or - in the church office during the week. Please purchase your tickets by June 28th.

Remembering our homebound friends is a caring ministry of St. Paul meant to help us stay in touch with our members who aren’t able to be with us for worship. Please remember them in your prayers. You may also like to send a note or a card. This week our homebound friend is Mrs. Carol Miller, 10310 Village Circle Drive, # 229, Palos Park, IL 60464

Please pray for these members of our St. Paul family

Sandy Barry
Steve Czerniejewski
George Oberg
Jan Leise
Dawn Schumann
Bob Marcinkowski
Jennifer Garcia
June Hagberg
Dave Purdy
Judy Anderson
Carl Hoppe
Amanda Greene
Janice Janiszewski
Dorothy Pavella
Vic & Marty Both
Rich & Jan Przybycien
Bill Volk
Arthur Gerth
Ingrid Lesko
Jan Briede
Roy Hodgeman
Katherine Hice
Kurt Seehofer
Flora Jones
Graham Jackson
Kevin Hickey
Gloria Meyer
Elaine Lebron
Melva Smith
Delores Stegemann
Carol Small
Mike Degidio
Norma Silinski
Beverly Sellers
Betty Beegle
Warren Miller
Delphine Cherry

Ron Klingensmith
Louis Frank
Betty Kruckow
Herta Iversen
Loretta Frank.
Barbara Prendergast
Nancy Bundley
Rosa Richardson
Sarah Weber

Please pray for these friends and family of our members:

Roberta & Carlos Owens
Dorothy Kroll
Emily Feehan
LeRoy Bitner
Georgiana Easton
Jackie Plichta
Patricia Paulsen
Ken Kruckow
Janet Trierweiler
Vicki Warren
Rhonda Scott
Michelle Mitchell
Al Silinski
Pam Palhegyi
Carol Milazzo
Rich Huscher
The Lamberth Family
Jerry Gross
Louise Hrynkow
Gloria Folsom
Mary Beth Pasqua
Shirley Fairchild
Simeon Hoppe
Ron Lunt
Christopher Kosary
Sandy Plath

Iris McCoy
Shirley Demyres
Raquel Rameriz
Nick & Bridget DeAngelo
Henry Bonder
Kim & Shawn Skelton, Sr.
Kyle Hughes
Elaine Hoffstetter
Fred Raddatz
Allyson Seehofer
Selma Carmichael
Bernadette & Rich Trusk
Dana Kahn
Donald Hakanson
Guillermo Ramirez
Paul Noffke
Vern Howe
Shawn Harland
Ann Herold
Barb Potter
Wayne Volk
Lance Barrientos
Linda Shuman
Doris Potts
Doreen Holford
Judy Collins
Phyllis Hicks
Jimmy Kennedy, Jr.
Cathy Becker
Ken Matz
Jean & Al Zirbel
Carol Loecherbach
Charley Heitz
Sophia Salus
Justin & Ashley Fasel
Frank Coglina
Gene Wawrzynkowski
Kimberly Rooney
Evelyn & Ron Konieski

Audrey Metes
Richard DeSaga
Ken Wentz
Margaret Lundgreen
Julie King
Sharon Bryant
Anika Seger
Monica Kato
Herb Kleeman
Debra Kleeman
Sarah Skelton
Barbara Apt
Bob & Gloria Freeman
Carrie Aspan
Lisa Anglin
Devon Apt
Tristan Ferry
Hillary Pittelko
Sue Berg
Carol Jean & Tim McPhillips
Evelyn & Ron Konieczki
Katherine Zeleny
Elmo Schultz
Jose Urena
Mike Feyerer
Edward Cyga
Ted Gross
Avery Kenny
Ray Jackson
The DeAngelis Family
Lauren Rossetti
George Dodaro, Sr.
Daniel Musser
Rudy DeAngelis
David Frazzone
Anna Stendic
Debby Kehrl

- For Sandy Barry, Steve Czerniejewski, all of Sandy's family, and the Rush Hospital transplant team as Sandy is scheduled for her stem cell transplant this Wednesday, June 19th.
- For Bill Volk as he celebrates his 84th Birthday on Wednesday, June 19th.
- For our congregation, our Pastoral Call Committee, and for the candidates they are about to begin interviewing.

**Please let the church office know when your need for our congregational prayers is over.
(708) 423-1040**

FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7 I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15 My question is... Will you be my child? John 1:12-13 I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

*Love, Your Dad
Almighty God*

