

**Welcome to
Crestholme Presbyterian Church
3rd Sunday of Pentecost
June 13, 2021**

At the *, please stand, if you are able.
Large Print Hymnals, Bibles, and Hearing Assist Devices are available upon request.

Gather for Worship

PRELUDE

“Canzona”

Frescobald

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfXUN_3a2bs

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP “This Is The Day”

Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AlwbJSrlyc>

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Spirit of life

ALL: Fill our emptiness with your fullness

Leader: Spirit of power

ALL: Stir our hearts afresh

Leader: Spirit of love

ALL: Touch us, and through us, our neighbor

Leader: Spirit of Creativity

ALL: Enable and empower the gifts you have given

Leader: Spirit of Eternity

ALL: Draw us ever deeper into your Kingdom Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Weaver of truth, Fashioner of grace, Friend of the lost and the forsaken, Holy God, we come into Your presence to give praise and adoration, celebrating Your redeeming and recreating love. We come hopefully and expectantly with pilgrims and sojourners of all ages to meet again Your message of unremitting grace, through Him who is the Christ. **Amen.**

*** OPENING HYMN**

“Open My Eyes That I May See”

Red Hymnal #563

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDceaG7kFQA>

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, merciful and mighty Father, we lose our way so easily. It doesn't happen all at once. We do not turn our backs on you in an instant; not all at once. We turn a fraction of a degree at a time; and over time our backs are toward you; and we are indeed lost in a thicket of motives and a wilderness of sins. Our faith teaches us that your grace is not like our trespass. Little by little we have turned away, but in our Lord Jesus Christ you confront us all at once with our sin and our salvation. We lift up our eyes to you this morning. We confess our sins to you; forgive us our trespasses. Help us find our way. This we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Jesus tells of the shepherd who searches for his lost sheep. As the song "Amazing Grace" tells us, "I once was lost but now I'm found", we are found by and in Jesus.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, hear the Good News! We are made right with God through our faith in Jesus Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself for us, whose death was not in vain. Friends, believe the Good News! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

*** GLORIA PATRI**

Blue Hymnal #579

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUBxpypSblw>

*** SHARE THE PEACE OF CHRIST (From your seats, please)**

Leader: Peace be with you!

All: And also with you!

Leader: As God's forgiven people, share the peace of Christ with each other.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Parable of the Sower

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb7bvF5Ucrk>

Hear the word of God

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept you Word. Silence in us any voices but your own, so that we may hear your Word and also do it; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING**1 Samuel 15:34-16:13**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Samuel%2015:34-16:13&version=NIV>

PSALTER READING**Psalm 20**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ps+20&version=NIV>

CHORAL ANTHEM**“Jesus Saves”****Choir**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWNVJs46fVQ>

NEW TESTAMENT READING**2 Corinthians 5:6-10**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+5%3A6-10&version=NIV>

GOSPEL READING**Mark 4:26-34**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+4%3A26-34&version=NIV>

SERMON**“Green Thumbs”****Fred Archer****Written by The Rev. Jazzy Bostock**

Have you ever known one of those people with eternally green thumbs? You know, the person who seems to walk by, and plants just naturally perk up? The person whose yard is an explosion of color; whose orchid is perpetually in bloom; whose seeds always germinate, and sprout as they should? The beginning of this gospel – “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how” – brings to mind those people with green thumbs. Because, though our gospel makes it sound easy – scattering seed on the ground, and sleeping and rising night and day – if you are a person without green thumbs, it might be that you scatter the seeds and they lie, unchanged, in the earth.

This metaphor – the way Jesus describes the kingdom of God – makes it sound, on first read, like it comes to fruition by itself. Like there’s no responsibility we have to the seeds. I wonder, though, if that’s entirely true. Looking at people with eternally green thumbs – and thinking of ourselves and our, perhaps, not-green-thumbs, it’s easy to believe that this is just a fact of life; that our thumb colors are unchangeable, like hair color or eye color. But it might be a bit more complicated than that.

Care goes into seeds, even before they are planted. Each packet is dated and put in a cool, dry place to aid in its germination rate. Good gardeners will keep track of how well different seeds have performed. Green-thumbed people can tell you which variety of tomatoes gave the most fruit and which was sweetest. They can tell you what crops underperformed, or which seemed to attract pests. They haven't just planted the seeds, and walked away – they've paid attention, noticing what flourishes, and what struggles.

Care goes into the soil, too. Many gardeners have worm bins or compost piles, churning out what they call "black gold" – rich, fertile soil for the garden beds. People with green thumbs are constantly evaluating their soil – sometimes even sniffing the dirt! – and determining what it needs more of. They add amendments to strengthen the nutrition base. They keep track of what has grown where so they can rotate their crops, allowing the seeds themselves to deposit and draw from the earth to strengthen the health of the whole.

Care must be given to watering seedlings. More than one green-thumbed gardener has confessed that they talk to their seeds, perhaps humming while working in the garden, or perhaps adding chatty commentary about who is growing well, or who is doing a good job. Water can be a tricky balance – the ideal is the Goldilocks measure: not too much, or the seeds will drown, and not too little, or they won't have what they need to sprout. Water has to be just right, again demanding a level of care and attention from the gardener, asking us to notice when rain has fallen, or when a day is particularly hot.

I've been thinking about green thumbs and this parable, and wondering whether there might be more responsibility in scattering seed, in creating conditions for God's kingdom to take root than it might at first appear. There is a lot of unseen work that gardeners do – ways they have earned their green thumbs. There's dedication in tending to the plants, even before they are scattered. I wonder if there's unseen work – responsibility – that we have, too. How do we create favorable conditions for the kingdom of God to flourish? How do we prepare the soil and care for the seeds and bring our best to them?

In order for the kingdom of God to take root, its seeds need to be cared for – kept in a place to ensure their healthy germination. This happens when we read scripture and pray. We hold on to seeds, deep inside our hearts – and they wait there until it is time to be scattered.

Our soil is made nutrient-dense when we rest it from constant planting. Sabbath is one of those practices – giving us some time for our soil to lie fallow – some time for the earth to replenish itself. Sabbath practice is one of ceasing, and pausing – it’s counterintuitive to the world, which would have us work without ceasing. Our soil is turned and aerated when we pray and take time to dwell with God. Delving into the Word creates space in the soil, keeping it from compacting and preparing it to be good ground in which God’s kingdom will take root.

We water our small seedlings when we pray or meditate, when we take time to be with God. This might look different for different people; for some, being with God is singing along to worship music, and for others, it’s sitting in silence. For some, it might be in reading a book, and for others, in going on a walk. Taking time to abide in God, the seeds we are caring for are scattered into good soil and nurtured as they grow.

The kingdom of God is like a seed – it is coded, already, with the plant it is going to grow into. But it still needs good soil to take root. It needs levels of nutrients and water and a clear patch of earth to call its own. While we don’t have to do the work of creating the seed, we do have a responsibility to prepare the soil. The kingdom of God will surprise us with how and where and when it pops up – but we still have to do the work of green thumbs.

AMEN.

*** HYMN**

“Wonderful Words of Life”

Red Hymnal #406

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7x3OX6v5_o

Respond in Love and Service

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Leader: What do you believe when you confess your faith in “God the Father Almighty”?

All: That God is a God of love, and that God's love is powerful beyond measure.

Leader: What do you affirm when you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as "our Lord"?

All: That having been raised from the dead he reigns with compassion and justice over all things in heaven and on earth, especially over those who confess him by faith; and that by loving and serving him above all else, we give glory and honor to God.

Leader: What do you believe when you confess your faith in the Holy Spirit?

All: That apart from the Holy Spirit, our Lord can neither be loved, nor known, nor served. The Holy Spirit is the personal bond by which Jesus Christ unites us to himself, the teacher who opens our hearts to Christ, and the comforter who leads us to repentance, empowering us to live in Christ's service.

Leader: What do you affirm when you speak of "the life everlasting"?

All: That communion with Jesus Christ is eternal life itself. In him we were chosen before the foundation of the world. By him the eternal covenant with Israel was taken up, embodied, and fulfilled. To him we are joined by the Holy Spirit through faith, and adopted as children, the sons and daughters of God. Through him we are raised from death to new life. For him we shall live to all eternity.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*** DOXOLOGY**

Blue Hymnal #592

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uyg6-htOtHU>

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Heavenly Father, you have given us riches beyond measure. We can only return a fraction of what we owe you; but we ask, Lord, that you will bless our offerings and help us to use them wisely in your service and for your glory. **Amen!**

*** HYMN FOR OUR NATION "Heal our Land"**

Red Hymnal #800

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm_rA54EGw

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray to our victorious Savior on behalf of the Church, the world, and all people.

A brief silence

Thank you, dear Lord, for making your Kingdom begin so humbly in our midst!
Thank you for making it a place of welcome and shelter for all, even for nesting

birds. Thank you for not overwhelming us with your glory and power. Make our faith and love grow like cedar sprigs and mustard seeds, to your glory and for the good of our neighbor.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Clothe your Church with the beauty, holiness, and righteousness of Christ. Make it a lovely dwelling-place for all people. Grant that its words and deeds may bear the fruit which you desire, and which last unto eternity.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift before you the plight of Christians around the world who are persecuted for your Name's sake. Let their suffering yield a rich harvest of faith, love, and forgiveness. Shield and defend your missionaries, especially when they are met with hostility and rejection.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Plant this congregation firmly in Christ, our living water. May we abide in his love, share his forgiveness, teach his commandments, and share in his righteousness.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless our graduates with wisdom and uprightness of heart. Fulfil in them the Psalmist's words, and make them like trees planted beside streams of living water.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach our earthly rulers to walk not in the counsel of the ungodly; nor stand in the way of sinners; nor sit in the seat of scoffers. Teach them to delight on your Law; to meditate on it day and night; and to establish it as the source of justice, truth, and well-being among all people.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Keep in your care all who defend life, liberty, and justice. Teach them your commandments. Fill their minds with wisdom, their hearts with integrity, and their arms with courage and strength.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you: {List}. Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us, with them, into the unending joy of your Kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for gathering into the spacious branches of your heavenly Kingdom all the redeemed who have gone before us, especially those we love and miss the

most. Grant that we may always find refreshment in your Word, blessing in your Sacraments, guidance in your Spirit, and forgiveness in your Son, so that, with all your people, we may be gathered into the welcoming shelter of your embrace and may abide there in joy forever.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear and graciously answer our prayers, dear Lord, as it is best for us and most glorifies your holy name.

Join me now in the prayer Jesus taught the disciples saying:

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 debts, As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever. **Amen.**

*** CLOSING HYMN “Take the Name of Jesus With You” Red Hymnal #235**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CI4heEYGCas>

*** BENEDICTION**

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

The End of Today’s Worship Service – The Beginning of Service Announcements

Welcome to worship with us this morning! We’re glad that you’re here! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to become a part of our compassionate church family... ask Carlos, Larry or an Elder about meaningful participation and membership!

Next Sunday CLP Larry Sears will lead the service.