AS WE GATHER
Plants in God’s good earth respond to the showers He sends, producing plants for pasture and crops for harvest. In the psalm, David says it is as if “the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.” It is all natural, and so is our producing fruit for God as His Word works through us. That God works through us sinners is all grace; if we but hear the Word and let the Spirit give us understanding, a bountiful harvest will follow. Jesus likens it to seeds producing yields of up to a hundredfold. But we are no mere plants, as Paul points out in the Epistle. Because we have been adopted by our heavenly Father, we are brothers and sisters of Christ, the children of God, calling out to Him, “Abba! Father!” Our growth in faith is indeed by the grace of God, and to Him belongs all the credit for the bountiful harvest He reaps through us.

WELCOME
For you were called to freedom, brothers.
Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh,
but through love serve one another.
For the whole law is fulfilled in one word:
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
Galatians 5:13-14 ESV
Pastor: In the Old Testament Reading, God promises, “My word . . . shall not return to Me empty; it shall accomplish . . . and shall succeed.”

People: But we do not trust you in all things. We have sinned in thought, word, and deed. Forgive us, heavenly Father.

Pastor: Then God tells us, “You shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace.”

People: But we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. Hear us, free us, and lead us in paths pleasing to you, heavenly Father.

Pastor: In the Gospel, our Lord explains that “the one who hears the word and understands it . . . bears fruit.” By the grace of God, we believe and understand that Jesus, the Word of God in the flesh, succeeded in destroying death and rising victorious for us. For His sake, God forgives us and uses us to bear fruit for Him. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May the Word planted inside you produce a great harvest for our gracious Lord.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God!

HYMN OF PRAISE “Love the Lord Your God”
Love the Lord Your God with all your heart
With all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.
Love the Lord Your God with all your heart
With all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength;
With all your heart, with all your soul,
With all your mind, with all your strength;
I will love You, Lord, with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength.

I will serve the Lord with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength.
I will serve the Lord with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength.

Bridge:
Praise Singers Congregation (Echo)
I will love You; (I will love You;)
I will praise You; (I will praise You;)
I will serve You; (I will serve You;)
I will trust You; Lord (I will trust You...)

With all my heart, with all my soul,
With all my mind, with all my strength;
With all my heart, with all my soul,
With all my mind, with all my strength;
I will love You, Lord, with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength:
I will love You, Lord, with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength:
I will love You, Lord, with all my heart,
With all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY
Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, who has given us this good earth in which to live and who sends rain and sun to cause plants to produce fruit and grain for harvest,

People: continue to send your life-giving Word to us so that we resist the cares of this world and return to you a harvest of new sons and daughters,

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen. (Be seated)
OLD TESTAMENT READING  Isaiah 55:10–13 (God’s Word accomplishes His plans as surely as rain gives growth to plants.)

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water 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 shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. 13 “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM  “Only a Holy God”

EPISODE  Romans 8:12–17 (Because the Spirit leads us, we know we are children of God.)

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN’S SONG  “My God is So Great”

My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there’s nothing my God cannot do. (repeat)

The mountains are His, the rivers are His, the stars are His handiwork, too.

My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there’s nothing my God cannot do, for you!

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL  Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23 (Whoever hears the Word and understands it will produce a great harvest for God in spite of worldly opposition.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.
People: Glory to you, O Lord.

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears, let him hear.”

18 “Hear then the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. 23 As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”
Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.
People: Praise to you, O Christ.
(Be seated)

SERMON HYMN “In Christ Alone”
Verse 1
In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

Verse 2
In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross, as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

Verse 3
There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

Verse 4
No guilt in life no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Ending: No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

SERMON “The Power of God's Seed” Isaiah 55:10-13
(Rise)

CATECHISM Explanation of the Third Article
People: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

OFFERING Offering plates will be placed in the narthex and elevator room for gathering at the end of the service.
PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Almighty God, hear the prayers of your people, grant to us all things needful and beneficial, and keep from us all things harmful.

(Brief silence for personal prayers)

Pastor: Holy Lord, mighty God, you are the strength of the hills and the hope of the ends of the earth. Give to our hearts your perfect peace, that we may not be anxious nor live in fear.

People: Fill us with faith that we may rest all our hopes, dreams and desires upon your merciful goodness.

Pastor: Holy Lord, mighty God, you send forth water upon the earth, that it may bring forth abundant fruit and feed our bodies with all that we need. As the seed of your Word will not return empty, plant it deeply in our hearts and souls that it may bring forth good fruit.

People: Bless us to bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, living in peace and harmony, loving others in truth, and graciously forgiving and accepting even those who are opposed to us.

Pastor: Holy Lord, mighty God, your Spirit accompanies the witness of your people who speak your Word before the world. Grant success to the missionary and mission planter and to every pastor and church worker, especially our Together in Mission partners, Chuck Ferry and Rachel Meyer. Bless Pastor Noah as he prayerfully considers the call to serve Epiphany Lutheran Church in Kenmore, Washington.

People: Grant them healing, health, hope and peace in Christ.

Pastor: Holy God, mighty Lord, you have given power to the nations and those who govern to act for the good of your people. Thank you for the gift of life, even as we rejoice with the Graf family as they celebrate Jay’s 19th birthday.

People: Keep our hearts from being overburdened by the things of this mortal life, whether in time of plenty or in time of want. Deliver us from life’s difficulties, that our hearts may ever be fixed upon the true treasure of your grace.

Pastor: Holy God, mighty Lord, accept the tithes and offerings we bring as part of our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all your goodness. Keep us from being tossed about by every wind of change and chance, and help us to endure upon the firm foundation of your Word and Sacraments.

People: Prepare us so that we may worthily receive the Lord’s body and blood that we may be kept in the faith until the day we are reunited with all who have gone before us.

Pastor: Almighty God and Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, both now and forevermore.

People: Amen.
THE LORD’S PRAYER
People: 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.

SACRAMENT

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

THE PEACE OF THE LORD
Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

(Distribution) Wait for the ushers to direct you to come forward.

HYMN #537 “Beautiful Savior”

Beautiful Savior, King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I’d love Thee, Truly I’d serve Thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows, Fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flow’rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
He makes our sorrow’wing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine, Fair is the moonlight,
Bright the sparkling stars on high; Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer Than all the angels in the sky.

Common Dismissal

Post-communion Thanksgiving
Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have graciously sent your Word into our hearts and minds through this life-giving Sacrament.
People: Continue to grant us gracious growth as we seek to produce a bountiful harvest to the glory of your holy name;
Pastor: through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
People: Amen.
BENEDICTION
Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
People: Amen.

DISMISSAL
Pastor: Go in peace as you serve the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God!

CLOSING HYMN  “All the Earth Will Sing Your Praises”
Chorus: You lived, You died, You said in three days You would rise
        You did...You’re alive.
        You rule, You reign, You said You’re coming back again
        I know that You will
        And all the earth will sing Your praises
        All the earth will sing Your praises.
Verse: You took, You take, our sins away oh God.
        You give, You gave, Your life away for us
        You came down, You saved us through the cross
        Our hearts are changed because of Your great love.
Repeat Chorus
Ending: All the earth will sing Your praises.