SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Free, Faithful, Flourishing
July 8, 2026

AS WE GATHER
Any gardener will admit they have seen certain plants flourish while others fail. The plants don't get a choice in the matter. A plant cannot affect the amount of sunlight, moisture, or attention it receives. It simply grows the way it was designed to. You have been planted by the Lord in His garden. You have seen the light of His Gospel, been watered in Baptism, and been nourished by heaven's food. You have been designed to flourish! A pear tree doesn't grow pumpkins, and neither do the redeemed fall back into fear or slavery. You are the harvest of the Lord. We grow to His glory.

Reception of Holy Communion: If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

WELCOME

VERSE
"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forevermore. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18, NIV)

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #901 "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

Open now thy gates of beauty; Zion, let me enter there,
Where my soul in joyful duty Waits for Him who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place, Filled with solace, light, and grace!

Gracious God, I come before Thee; Come Thou also unto me.
Where we find Thee and adore Thee, There a heav'n on earth must be.
To my heart, O enter Thou; Let it be Thy temple now!

1 continued

Here Thy praise is gladly chanted; Here Thy seed is duly sown.
Let my soul, where it is planted, Bring forth precious sheaves alone,
So that all I hear may be Fruitful unto life in me.

Thou my faith increase and quicken; Let me keep Thy gift divine,
Howsoe'er temptations thicken; May Thy Word still o'er me shine
As my guiding star through life, As my comfort in all strife.

Speak, O God, and I will hear Thee; Let Thy will be done indeed.
May I undisturbed draw near Thee While Thou dost Thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

(Rise)

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: Amen.
Pastor: Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever,
People: the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I might be glorified.
Pastor: They are planted in the house of the LORD;
People: they flourish in the courts of our God.
Pastor: I will rejoice in doing them good,
People: and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: The Lord has delivered us from the domain of darkness
People: and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
Pastor: Almighty God and Father,
People: we confess, as your people, our need for your merciful kindness. We are prisoners of our own wants, our own fears, and our own inborn sinfulness. Our actions and interactions often fail as reflections of your kingdom. Our thoughts, desires, and actions are often borne out of love for ourselves, rather than our love for others or for you. Forgive us and free us, Lord, to love what you love and go where you lead, all by the grace of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son, Jesus, to die for you, and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE #578 "Thy Strong Word"

Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; At Thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank Thee, While Thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous; Bright with Thine own holiness,
Glorious now, we press toward glory, And our lives our hopes confess.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

God the Father, light-creator, To Thee laud and honor be.
To Thee, Light of Light begotten, Praise be sung eternally.
Holy Spirit, light-revealer, Glory, glory be to Thee.
Mortals, angels, now and ever Praise the holy Trinity!

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Blessed Lord, since you have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; 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)

✠ WORD ✠

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 55:10–13* (The Lord's powerful Word sets His people free in joy and singing.) "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,[11] 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. [12] "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. [13] Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; 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.

EPISTLE *Romans 8:12–17* (Set free by the Spirit, believers are challenged to recognize their adoption into the family of God.) [12] 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, [17] 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.

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23* (Jesus shares and interprets His story of the lavish sower and the harvest He seeks.)

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, [6] 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)

CHILDREN'S SONG & CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

"This is My Commandment"

This is My commandment, that you love one another that your joy may be full.
This is my commandment, that you love one another that your joy may be full.
That your joy may be full. That your joy may be full.
This is my commandment, that you love one another that your joy may be full.

SERMON HYMN #524 "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds"

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds In a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, And drives away our fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole And calms the heart's unrest;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul and to the weary, rest.

Dear name! The rock on which I build, My shield and hiding place;
My never failing treasury filled With boundless stores of grace.

O Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend, My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my life, my way, my end, Accept the praise I bring.

How weak the effort of my heart, How cold my warmest thought!
But when I see Thee as Thou art, I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim With ev'ry fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name Refresh my soul in death!

SERMON **"How Can Anybody Hear?** *Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23*

(Rise)
OFFERTORY LSB p. 192
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit.
Amen.

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.
(Be seated)

OFFERING As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Pastor: Holy Lord, your Word does not return to you empty but accomplishes your purpose.

People: By your Spirit, make our hearts good soil for your Word, that by such faith we may bring forth in our lives the good works to which you have called us.

Pastor: Lord of life, continue to sow your Word through the fields of the earth. Bless pastors and missionaries as they proclaim your truth.

People: Prepare the hearts of all who hear to believe and yield abundant fruit.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, bless Poppy's and Adalyn's parents and Godparents and all parents and Godparents with faithfulness as they plant your Word into their children.

People: May their children grow steadfast among the cares and troubles of this world.

Pastor: Almighty God, all the nations of the earth are yours, and besides you there is no other God. Give our leaders the desire for peace and stability and the ability to govern wisely.

People: Let them plead the cause of widows and orphans and serve the needs of the least among us. Bring an end to war and strife, and allow all to live in peace and safety.

Pastor: O Lord, look with mercy upon those who suffer from illness of body or mind. Be especially with Deaconess Carole, Nancy, Patrick, Sharon, Michael, Barb, Marlene, Katherine, Zach, Carole, Kathy, Dan, Maxine, Pam, Marilyn, Dorothy, Janet, Jerry, Rhonda, Harland, June, Cathy, John, Debbie, Janice, David, Helga, Dick, Margie, Anna, Charlene, Guy, Jill and Sarah. Give them healing and comfort them with your presence.

People: Grant them patience to endure suffering, and assure them at all times that they are your dear children and that the glory of Christ awaits them.

Pastor: Father in heaven we thank you for the gift of family. Today we especially pray with thanksgiving for Jay's 25th birthday and the blessing that he is to his family.

Grant him your richest blessings throughout the year. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to you alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, out of love for His fallen creation, humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. Risen from the dead, He has freed us from eternal death and given us life everlasting. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:

SANCTUS LSB p. 161

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory,
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI LSB p. 163

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.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

HYMN #589 "Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens"

Speak, O Lord, Your servant listens, Let Your Word to me come near;
Newborn life and spirit give me, Let each promise still my fear.
Death's dread pow'r, its inward strife, Wars against Your Word of life;
Fill me, Lord, with love's strong fervor That I cling to You forever!

Oh, what blessing to be near You And to listen to Your voice;
Let me ever love and hear You, Let Your Word be now my choice!
Many hardened sinners, Lord, Flee in terror at Your Word;
But to all who feel sin's burden You give words of peace and pardon.

Lord, Your words are waters living When my thirsting spirit pleads.
Lord, Your words are bread life-giving; On Your words my spirit feeds.
Lord, Your words will be my light Through death's cold and dreary night;
Yes, they are my sword prevailing And my cup of joy unfailing!

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me; Let Your words in me take root.
May Your Spirit e'er be near me That I bear abundant fruit.
May I daily sing Your praise, From my heart glad anthems raise,
Till my highest praise is given In the endless joy of heaven.

HYMN #921 "On What Has Now Been Sown"

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!

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.

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!

HYMN #923 "Almighty Father, Bless the Word"

Almighty Father, bless the Word Which through your grace we now have heard.
Oh, may the precious seed take root, Spring up, and bear abundant fruit!

We praise you for the means of grace As homeward now our steps we trace.
Grant, Lord, that we who worshipped here May all at last in heav'n appear.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heav'nly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in lovingkindness sent your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank you that for His sake you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask you not to forsake your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve you; 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.

CLOSING HYMN #643 "Sent Forth By God's Blessing"

Sent forth by God's blessing, Our true faith confessing,
The people of God from His dwelling take leave.
The Supper is ended. O now be extended
The fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of His teaching, Receptive souls reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
His grace did invite us, His love shall unite us
To work for God's kingdom and answer His call.

With praise and thanksgiving To God everliving,
The tasks of our ev'ry day life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing, In love ever caring,
Embracing His children of each tribe and race.
With Your feast You feed us, With Your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living With praise and thanksgiving
Give honor to Christ and His name that we bear.

Preacher & Liturgist — Pastor Michael Schumacher
Guest Organist — Bill Braun

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