

PRAISE SERVICE
JULY 12, 2026
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." (Psalm 122:1)

PRELUDE AND PREPARATION *During the prelude, prepare your heart for worship, read the introduction, look up the Scripture readings and pray: **Bless us, O God, with a reverent sense of Your presence, that we may be at peace and may worship You with all our mind and spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.***

CHILDREN *of all ages are welcome! The Children's Library is available if a child needs a break during the service.*

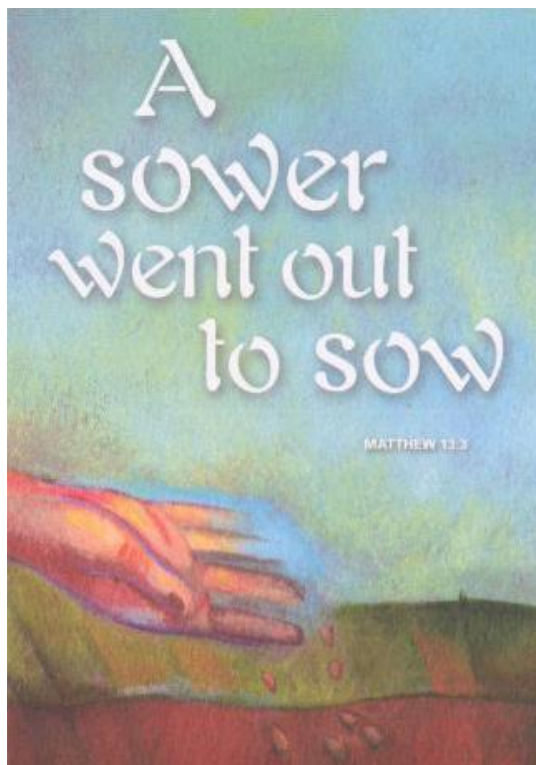
LISTENING DEVICES *for the hearing impaired are available at the sound board (back of the sanctuary).*

INTRODUCTION *For the next three Sundays, the gospel readings use the image of a seed. Though very small and seemingly insignificant, the seed contains its entire future, and with light and nourishment it will grow and prosper.*

The seed is a vital image of faith in God, baptism, a congregation's life, the Word, and the great paradox at the center of Christian faith—God brings flourishing life out of what appears to be little, dormant, even dead. This is a primary image of faith's central mystery: the dying and rising of Christ.

COMMEMORATION *In 1930, Swedish theologian, ecumenist, and social activist **Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931), bishop of Uppsala**, received the Nobel Prize for peace. Söderblom had intervened on behalf of war prisoners and displaced persons. He saw the value of the ancient worship of the church catholic. He believed social action was a step on the path toward a united Christianity, he organized the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work, which became the World Council of Churches. We remember him on this anniversary of his death in 1931, and his concern for social and ethical issues and a deeply devotional life.*

WELCOME AND MEDITATION



CALL TO WORSHIP....Psalm 65:1-4, 8b (congregation: *indented*)

Praise awaits You, O God, in Zion;

to You our vows will be fulfilled.

O You Who hear prayer,

to You all men will come.

When we were overwhelmed by sins,

You forgave our transgressions.

Blessed are those You choose

and bring near to live in Your courts!

We are filled with the good things of Your house,

of Your holy temple.

where morning dawns and evening fades

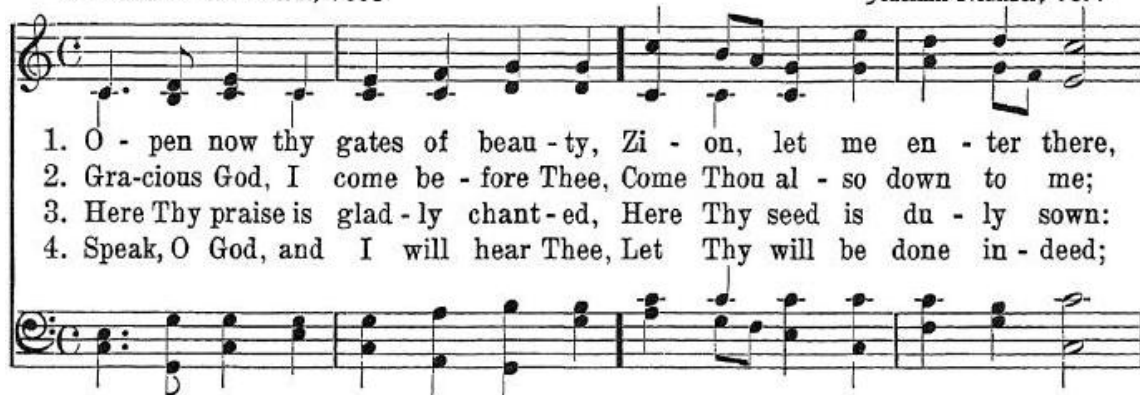
You call forth songs of joy.

GATHERING HYMN *(Please rise.)*

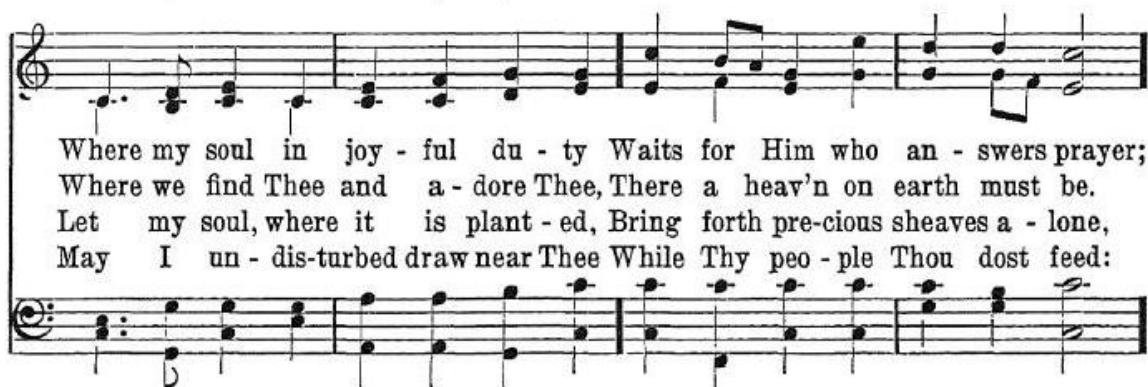
"Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty" (LBW # 250 verses 1-3, 5)

Benjamin Schmolck, 1734
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863

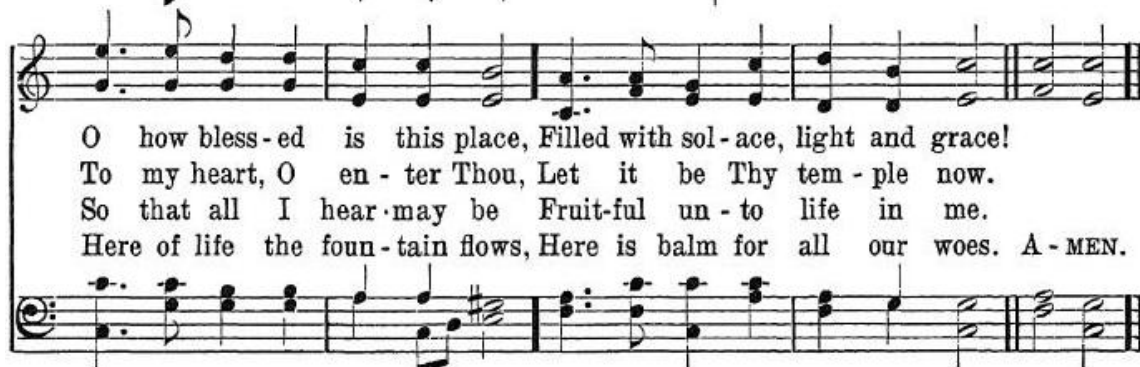
Joachim Neander, 1679



1. O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
2. Gra-cious God, I come be - fore Thee, Come Thou al - so down to me;
3. Here Thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, Here Thy seed is du - ly sown:
4. Speak, O God, and I will hear Thee, Let Thy will be done in - deed;



Where my soul in joy - ful du - ty Waits for Him who an - swers prayer;
Where we find Thee and a - dore Thee, There a heav'n on earth must be.
Let my soul, where it is plant - ed, Bring forth pre-cious sheaves a - lone,
May I un - dis-turbed draw near Thee While Thy peo - ple Thou dost feed:



O how bless-ed is this place, Filled with sol-ace, light and grace!
To my heart, O en - ter Thou, Let it be Thy tem - ple now.
So that all I hear may be Fruit-ful un - to life in me.
Here of life the foun-tain flows, Here is balm for all our woes. A - MEN.

INVOCATION (✠ = All may make the sign of the cross.)

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, ✠ one God, the Source of life, the Word of salvation, the Spirit of mercy.

C: AMEN.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Let us confess our sins to God, Who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

(Please kneel. Silence is kept for reflection.)

P: God of compassion, **C: We confess that we have neglected Your commandments and have sinned against You in our thoughts, in our words and in our deeds. Forgive our sins, Merciful God, those known and unknown, things done and left undone. Make our hearts burn with love for You and those in need, so that our lives may witness to Your never-failing love. AMEN.**

P: Brothers and sisters, buried with ✠ Christ by baptism into His death, your sins are forgiven. The death Christ died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. So you also, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. **C: AMEN.**

GREETING *(Please rise.)*

P: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. The God who created the world and fills it with life be with you all.

C: And also with you.

WE PRAISE GOD'S NAME

With one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Let all the peoples praise him.” (Romans 15:6,11)

PRAISE SONG “Shout to the Lord”

(ELW # 821 - favorite - Darlene Zschech - Praise Band) →

My Je - sus, my Sav - ior, Lord, there is none like you.

All of my days I want to praise the won - ders of your might - y love.

My com - fort, my shel - ter, tow - er of ref - uge and strength;

let ev - ry breath, all that I am nev - er cease to wor - ship you.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth; let us sing pow - er and maj - es - ty, praise

to the King. Moun - tains bow down and the seas will roar at the

sound of your name. I sing for joy at the work of your hands;

for - ev - er I'll love you, for - ev - er I'll stand.

Noth - ing com - pares to the prom - ise I have in you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: The Lord be with you. C: And also with you.

L: Let us pray together: C: 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. AMEN.

RESPONSIVE READING....Psalm 65:5-13

*(congregation reads **indented**)*

We are filled with the good things of Your house,
of Your holy temple.

You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness,

O God our Savior,

the hope of all the ends of the earth

and of the farthest seas,

Who formed the mountains by Your power,

having armed Yourself with strength,

Who stilled the roaring of the seas,

the roaring of their waves,

and the turmoil of the nations.

Those living far away fear Your wonders;

where morning dawns and evening fades

You call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it;

You enrich it abundantly.

The streams of God are filled with water

to provide the people with grain,

for so You have ordained it.

You drench its furrows and level its ridges;

You soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with Your bounty,

and Your carts overflow with abundance.

The grasslands of the desert overflow;

the hills are clothed with gladness.

The meadows are covered with flocks

and the valleys are mantled with grain;

they shout for joy and sing.

PRAISE SONG *(Please sit.)* “The Trees of the Field”

(Maj # 211 - favorite - Praise Band

- Text: Steffi Geiser Rubin; Tune: Stuart Dauermann) →



WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

For everything was written to teach us, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

FIRST LESSONIsaiah 55:10-13.....p. 1149

P: Word of God, Word of Life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SECOND LESSONRomans 8:1-11.....p. 1756

P: Word of God, Word of Life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

COLLECT FOR CHILDREN *(When children are present.)*

P: We will dismiss for Children's Church after the Gospel reading.

Let us pray the Collect for Children together: **C: Lord, we lift up to You the children of our church. Protect, guide, and bless them. May they grow in faith, wisdom, and love, finding their identity in You and walking in the purpose You have for them. Surround them with Your**

grace, strengthen their families, and raise them to be
lights in this world for Your glory; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. AMEN.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Please rise.)*

“Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil” (ELW # 512 - Handt Hanson)

The musical score is written for a two-part setting (Soprano and Bass) in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The score consists of seven systems of two staves each. The lyrics are: "Lord, let my heart be good soil, o - pen to the seed of your Word. Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un - der - stood. When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold, warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way. Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil." The score ends with a double bar line.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, o - pen to the seed of your
Word. Lord, let my heart be good soil, where
love can grow and peace is un - der - stood. When my heart is hard,
break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way. Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13th Chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

GOSPELMatthew 13:1-23.....p. 1516

P: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

(Please be seated. Young children may go to Children's Church. See space for sermon notes in Announcements insert.)

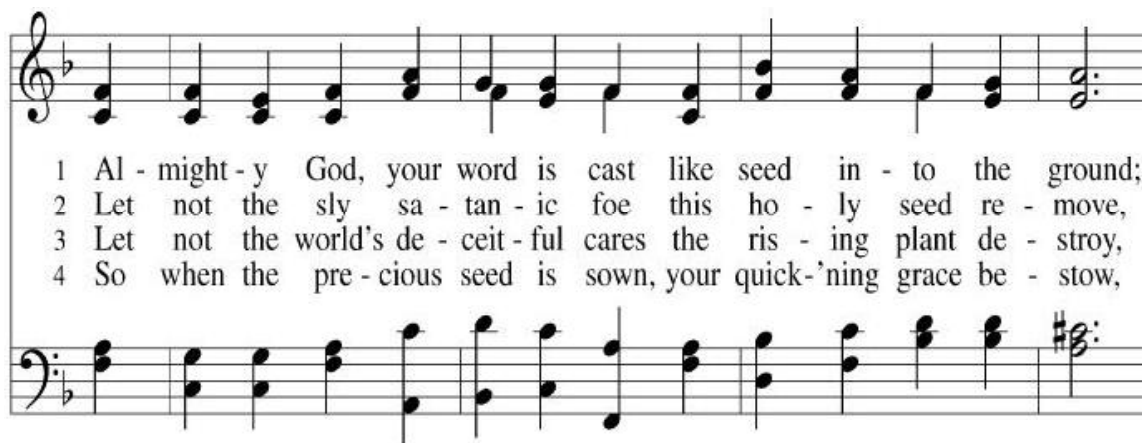
SERMON "The Formula for Victory"

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

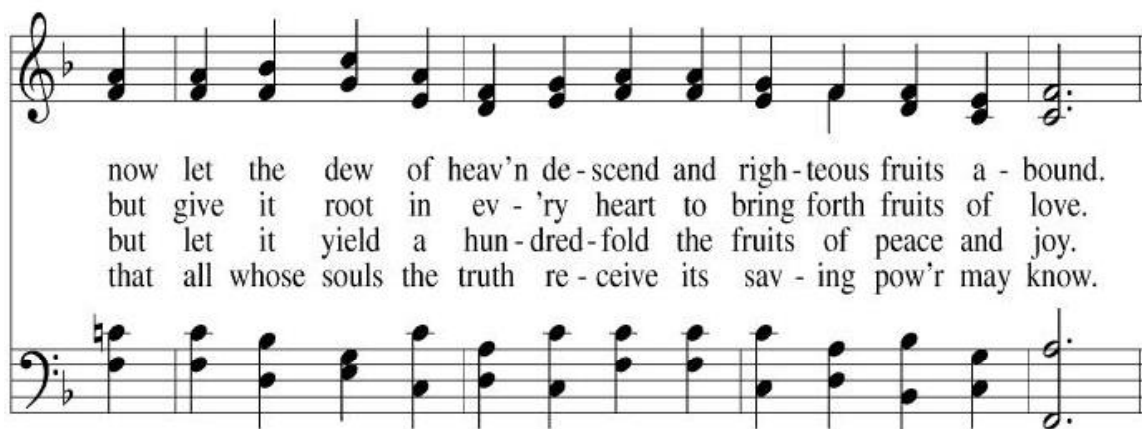
*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.
(Romans 15:13)*

HYMN OF THE DAY *(Please rise.)*

"Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast" (ELW # 518)



1 Al - might - y God, your word is cast like seed in - to the ground;
2 Let not the sly sa - tan - ic foe this ho - ly seed re - move,
3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares the ris - ing plant de - stroy,
4 So when the pre - cious seed is sown, your quick-'ning grace be - stow,



now let the dew of heav'n de - scend and righ - teous fruits a - bound.
but give it root in ev - 'ry heart to bring forth fruits of love.
but let it yield a hun - dred - fold the fruits of peace and joy.
that all whose souls the truth re - ceive its sav - ing pow'r may know.

Text: John Cawood, 1775-1852, alt.

Music: ST. FLAVIAN, J. Day, Psalter, 1562

SMALL CATECHISM READING

L: Let us confess our faith by reading a portion of Luther's Small Catechism, *Part III. The Lord's Prayer*:

L: What is The Fifth Petition?

C: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matthew 6:12)

L: What does this mean?

C: We pray in this request that our Heavenly Father will not regard our sins or deny our prayers on account of them, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it. Instead we ask that God would give us all things by grace, for we sin many times each day and truly deserve only punishment. Because God does this, we will, of course, want to forgive from our hearts and willingly do good to those who sin against us.

OFFERING *Though we no longer pass the plate, offerings are needed more than ever. The plate is located at the back of the center aisle. Please place your offering and your Communication Card there as you come in or go out. Thank You!*

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *(Please kneel as you are able.)*

(Response: L: Lord, in Your mercy, C: hear our prayer.)

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.

WE ARE SENT INTO GOD'S WORLD

Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD! (Isaiah 2:5)

(Please sit.)

INSTALLATION OF VBS STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

(All those helping with VBS please stand in place.)

P: Dear Christian Friends, baptized into the priesthood of Christ, we all are called to offer ourselves to the Lord of the Church in thanksgiving for what He has done and continues to do for us. It is our privilege to recognize and support those engaged in the ministry of teaching, presenting the Gospel to children through Vacation Bible School.

P: Thank you for giving of your time and talents for this important ministry of the church. Will you endeavor to discharge your responsibilities faithfully, following our Lord's example of humble service?

R: We will, and we ask God to help and guide us.

P: And you, people of Holy Cross Church, will you support and pray for the VBS Team as they diligently minister this week?

C: We will.

P: The Vacation Bible School ministry is now committed to you in the name of the triune God. May you be fully equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit, to accomplish all that the Father desires these next six days as you faithfully serve Him to the glory of Jesus Christ.

C: AMEN.

BLESSING

P: God gives rest to all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens. Almighty and merciful God, the Father, the  Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you, this day and forevermore.

C: AMEN.

SENDING HYMN *(Please rise.)*

"Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing" (Maj # 327 - favorite) →

John Fawcett, altered

SICILIAN MARINERS
Tattersall's *Psalmody*, 1794

1 Lord, dis - miss us with Thy bless-ing, Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion For Thy gos - pel's joy-ful sound;

1 Let us each, Thy love pos-ses - sing, Tri-umph in re - deem-ing grace.
2 May the fruits of Thy sal - va - tion In our hearts and lives a - bound.

1 O re - fresh us, O re - fresh us, Trav-eling through this wil-der-ness.
2 Ev - er faith - ful, ev - er faith - ful To the truth may we be found. A-men.

PASSING THE PEACE

L: As we leave to serve the Risen Lord in the power of His Spirit,
let us share with one another some of the blessings of peace we
have received. The peace of the Lord be with you!

C: And also with you!

POSTLUDE “*Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*” (VBS cd track # 9)

FELLOWSHIP AND REFRESHMENTS Everyone is invit-
ed to remain for fellowship and refreshments. Snacks, coffee and
hot water are available in the Gathering Place. You can brew your
own coffee/tea using the Keurig® in the Parlor.

ALTAR FLOWERS & BULLETINS ARE SPONSORED BY:

Holy Cross, to the Glory of God

JULY 12, 2026

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SERVANTS OF THE LORD TODAY

GREETER: 8:30-Sally Stein | 11:00-Sharon Branigan
SOUND: 8:30-Josh Miller | 11:00-Ken Yoxheimer
LIVESTREAM: 8:30-Jonah Kincaid
SONG LEADER/PRAISE BAND: Pastor David
LITURGIST: 8:30-Seth Miller | 11:00-Karen Brown
LECTOR: 8:30-Patty Stein | 11:00-Karen Brown
CHILDREN'S CHURCH: Ruthann Kistler
ALTAR GUILD: Jan Stryker & **Volunteer needed**
COUNTERS: Jan Stryker & Karen Brown
GRASS CUTTERS (7/6-11): Gary Mosser, Jim Steiner
HOSPITALITY: Holy Cross Social Ministry
SEXTON: **Volunteers needed**
PHONETREE: Stephen Zeiner
PRAYER OF THE CHURCH: Mike Zyskowski
PRAYER CARE: call Ruthann Kistler (610) 217-0397

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church



a congregation of the
NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH



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Holycrosspastor@rcn.com † Preschool (610) 867-9735
www.holycrossbethlehem.com

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. David L. Brown, *Pastor* † Ruthann Kistler, *Christian Ed. Dir.*
Nancy Cook, *Organist* † Karen Brown, *Secretary*
Volunteers Needed, Sexton † Karen Steiner, *Pre-school*
Lisa Wechsler, *Bookkeeper* † Stephen Zeiner, *Webmaster*

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship - 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM † Sunday School - 9:45 AM
(*Holy Communion 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays & Major Feasts*)

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