

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Pentecost 4 - June 20, 2021

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

**Hymn #255 - “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, oh, enter thou;  
Let it be thy temple now!**

**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.**

**Confession of Sins:**

**P:** Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**C:** **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

**P:** Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**First Lesson: Ezekiel 17:22-24**

This is what the Lord God says. I myself will take part of the tip of the cedar and plant it. From the topmost of its shoots I will pluck off a tender sprig, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it. It will produce branches, bear fruit, and become a magnificent cedar. Flying birds of every kind will live under it. In the shelter of its branches they will nest. Then all the trees in the countryside will know that I, the Lord, bring down the high tree and raise up the low tree, that I make the green tree dry up, and I make the dried-up tree blossom. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will carry it out. (EHV)

**Psalm 92**

**Refrain: Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

**How great are your 'works, O LORD,  
How profound your thoughts!**

**The senseless man ‘does not know,  
Fools do not ‘understand,**

**That though the wicked spring ‘up like grass  
And all evildoers ‘flourish,**

**They will be forever ‘destroyed.  
But you, O LORD, are exalted for’ever.**

**Refrain: Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

**The righteous will flourish like a ‘palm tree,  
They will flourish in the courts ‘of our God.**

**They will still bear fruit ‘in old age,  
They will stay ‘fresh and green,**

**Proclaiming, “The LORD is ‘upright;  
He is my rock, and there is no wicked’ness in him.”**

**Glory be to the Father and ‘to the Son  
And to the Holy ‘Spirit,  
As it was in the be’ginning,  
Is now, and will be forever. ‘Amen.**

**Refrain: Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

### **Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

Now we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal home in heaven, which is not made by human hands. In fact, the reason we groan is that we long to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven. If we do indeed put it on, we will certainly not be found naked. To be sure, while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as the down payment. Therefore we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. But we are confident and would much prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. And for this reason we make it our goal to

please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he did while in the body, whether good or bad. (EHV)

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia. May your priests be clothed with righteousness; may your saints sing for joy. Alleluia.

**Gospel: Mark 4:26-34**

He said, “The kingdom of God is like this: A man scatters seed on the ground, and while he sleeps and rises, night and day, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. The ground produces fruit on its own: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain in the head. When the crop is ready, he swings the sickle without delay, because the harvest has come.” Then he said, “To what should we compare the kingdom of God? Or with what parable may we picture it? It is like a mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is one of the smallest of all the seeds planted in the ground. Yet when it is planted, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches so that the birds of the sky can nest under its shade.” With many similar parables he continued to speak the word to them, as much as they were able to hear. He did not speak to them without a parable. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them. (EHV)

**The Apostles’ Creed:**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there 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.**

**Hymn #544 - “Preach You the Word”**

**Preach you the Word and plant it home**

**To those who like or like it not,  
The Word that shall endure an stand  
When flow'rs and mortals are forgot.**

**We know how hard, O Lord, the task  
Your servant bids us undertake:  
To preach your Word and never ask  
What prideful profit it may make.**

**The sower sows; his reckless love  
Scatters abroad the goodly seed,  
Intent alone that there may be  
The wholesome loaves that people need.**

**Though some be snatched and some be scorched  
And some be choked and matted flat,  
The sower sows; his heart cries out,  
“Oh, what of that, and what of that?”**

**Preach you the Word and plant it home  
And never faint; the Harvest-Lord  
Who gave the sower seed to sow  
Will watch and tend his planted Word.**

**The Sermon:      Mark 4:26-34  
                          “Great Results Come From Small Beginnings”**

The account which we have before us today is the last in a series of **parables** which Jesus taught on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, near the city of Capernaum. A **parable** is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, and Jesus made **use** of such parables for **two** reasons. Frequently, hardened **scoffers** would be present in the crowds which surrounded Jesus. They were there to find something which they could use **against** Him in the future. But, when Jesus spoke in **parables**, they weren't able to figure out the **importance** of what Jesus was saying. At the same time, there would be many **believers** listening to Jesus' words. And when Jesus spoke in **parables**, they **understood** the gems of truth which came from the lips of their Lord and Savior - gems which made their faith in Him even **stronger** than it had been before. One such gem is found in our text for today - the parable of the **mustard seed**. In this parable, Jesus teaches us that **Great Results Come From**

**Small Beginnings.** Using a slightly different picture, a poet once said it **this** way, “*Large streams from little fountains flow. Tall oaks from little acorns grow.*”

Now, while little **acorns** don’t seem to be very **important**, in comparison the **mustard seed** is virtually **insignificant**, because it is **much** smaller than an acorn. But as **small** as mustard seeds are, you probably **also** realize that there are **other** seeds which are even **smaller**. Nevertheless, when Jesus says, “*It is **one of the smallest of all the seeds planted in the ground,***” His words are **true**. Jesus was talking about the seeds which were traditionally planted in the gardens of the Middle East, and of **those** seeds, the mustard seed is actually the **smallest**.

In reality, **all** seeds are relatively **small** when we compare them with the **plants** which they ultimately produce. There is tremendous **power** and **potential** in every seed. It’s amazing how **hardy** they are - how they can overcome almost every obstacle which they encounter. If there’s a **stone** in the way, the plant will grow **around** it. If the ground is too **hard**, the sprout has the strength to break through to the surface **anyway**.

We can easily move this picture out of the **plant** world, and apply it to the **human** world. For example, what **parents** haven’t marveled at the miraculous physical, mental, and emotional growth of their **children** - from the time of conception to birth, through childhood and adolescence, and on into adulthood? What **teacher** hasn’t looked at the students in his or her classroom, and wondered if there might be a future President of the United States sitting there - or wondered which ones would be the homemakers and factory workers, the pastors and teachers, or the doctors and lawyers of the future? There is great **power** and **potential** in **every** individual - and every individual starts out **small**. **Great Results Come From Small Beginnings.**

And while we’re talking about people, let’s not forget about our **spiritual** side, because Jesus says, “*The kingdom of **God** is **within** you.*” That kingdom of God **also** had a small beginning. God planted the mustard seed of **faith** in our hearts at the time of our **baptism**. And from that time on, He has been watering and nurturing that seed of faith with His **Word** - so that it will **grow**, and **flourish**, and bear much **fruit**. The fruit which **we** bear will **show** itself, in the ways we **serve** our Lord.

Jesus gives us a prime **example** of the fruits of faith in today’s parable. Concerning the mustard seed He says, “*When it is planted, it **grows up** and becomes **larger** than all the garden plants and puts out **large** branches so that the*

*birds of the sky can nest under its shade.*” That little mustard **seed** grows into a garden **shrub**, often reaching a height of 10 to 15 feet! What tremendous **growth**! And that’s exactly the kind of growth that the Christian **Church** has experienced. In the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet **predicts** such tremendous growth, and in the **New Testament** we see that prophecy **fulfilled**. The Christian Church started out **small** in **many** ways. First of all, they were small in **numbers**, beginning with just Jesus and His 12 disciples. However, slowly and surely their group **expanded**, and **grew** into a great **multitude**. The Church also started **small** in terms of **scope**, beginning in Galilee and Judea (particularly in the city of Jerusalem). Yet, within 40 years of Christ’s death and resurrection, the Good News of the Gospel had already reached all the great cultural centers of the Roman world - and like the “Energizer bunny,” it’s still going, and going, and going! The Church started out **small** in terms of **prestige** too. The Apostle Paul reminded the members of the church in Corinth of their **humble** beginnings. He said, “*Consider your call, brothers. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view, not many were powerful, and not many were born with high status.*” For many years the Christian community was viewed with **disgust** and **disrespect**. They were even hunted down and treated as **criminals**. When it came to Christians, the motto was, “Shoot first, and ask questions later.” But that has all **changed** now. **Great Results Come From Small Beginnings.**

Perhaps one of the most important facts which we should not lose sight of in this text, is brought out in verse 32, “*When it is **planted**, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants.*” Before the mustard seed or **any** seed will **grow**, it must first be **planted**. That’s the way it has always worked in the **past**. In the Bible we hear about people like Abraham, and Noah, and Jesus’ disciples - people who had **received faith** from God, who had that faith **nourished** through God’s Word so that it would **grow**, and who then found ways to **plant** the seed of the Gospel in **other** places - ways to **share their faith** with others. That certainly brings to mind for me, the importance of not just **talking about**, but actually **doing** mission work. The seed of the Gospel will **grow**, but it must first be **planted** - and the time for planting the Gospel is **now**.

I think you’re probably all pretty familiar with **farming**, but even if you aren’t, it doesn’t take a big stretch of our imagination to realize that if we sit back and take it easy during **planting** time, there won’t be any crops to bring in when the **harvest** time rolls around. It’s not any **different** when we’re talking about the **Gospel**. So, as we bring our gifts to the Lord, let’s be **aware** of the many fields which need to be **planted**. Let’s continue to bring **larger** offerings, so we can plant **more seed** wherever it’s needed. Let’s show our **support** for our fellow believers

in North and South America; in India, Southeast Asia, and Japan; on the continent of Africa - and in all our **future** mission fields as well. In time, the tiny mustard seed of **faith** will blossom in **their** hearts too. And when it does, they will reach out to still **others**. But it has to **start** right **here**, in **Osceola** - and in **all** our hometowns. **Great Results Come From Small Beginnings.**

In conclusion, I'd like to tell you a true story about our WELS World Mission which broadcasts worship services on the radio into the Ukraine. One of the men who used to be involved in that mission outreach program told about the **generous support** which they had been receiving - especially from the **children** of our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Sunday Schools. But out of the **hundreds** of gifts which they had received, **one** gift in **particular**, really stood out in his mind. In that gift, along with the usual check, there was a **silver dollar**, and a note of **explanation**.

The teacher who had written the note explained that the little boy who had brought that silver dollar came from a family which didn't have many outward, earthly blessings. Afraid that perhaps the coin had been brought by **mistake**, she said to the child, "*This silver dollar must be something very **special** to you.*" And he answered, "*Yes, it **is**. That's why I brought it for **Jesus!***" What a beautiful testimony of a child-like **faith**. As opportunities all over the world **continue** to open up for us to do **additional** work - once again a **child** is leading us. **Great Results Come From Small Beginnings.**

We have the opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus right here at **home** too. So often, we seem to focus our attention on the **bad** things of life - the disappointments, the discouragements, the shortfalls, and the cutbacks. We may even look into our community and say, "There are so many people out there who **never** go to church, and who aren't even **interested** in learning more about God's Word." But the **blessings** are there too, just as God has **promised** they would be. What we need to do, out of **thankfulness** for what God has **already done** for us, is to **focus** on those blessings. When there are people who don't go to church (and there always will be), that gives us the opportunity to **share our faith** with them. It gives us the opportunity to **show them** how much Jesus means to **us**. Our **children** can do it, and **we** can do it **too**. My friends, have **patience**, exercise your **faith**, keep on **praying**, and keep on **working** to spread God's kingdom. We may not do everything **right**, and we may not do everything **right away**. But the important thing is that we **get started**, even if it's in a very **small** way. After all, God will most certainly be **with** us to guide our thoughts, our words, and our actions - and remember **Great Results Come From Small Beginnings**. Amen.



### **Prayers:**

Heavenly Father, on this **Father's Day**, we ask You to make all of us good Christian **parents**. Teach us to **understand** our children better, to listen **patiently** to what they say, and to answer all their questions with **kindness**. Keep us from **interrupting** them, talking **back** to them, or **contradicting** them. Make us as courteous to **them**, as we want them to be to **us**. Give us the **courage** to confess our **sins** against our children, and to ask their **forgiveness** when we know that we have wronged them.

May we not hurt the **feelings** of our children. Forbid that we should ever laugh at their **mistakes**, **ridicule** them, or be **sarcastic** with them. Let us be examples of **honesty** for them, not tempting them to **lie** or **steal** through our own dishonest actions. Guide us hour by hour that we may **demonstrate** by all we say and do, that **honesty** is always the best policy. Help us to see the **good** things they do, and give us words of **praise** for them when they have done what is right.

Help us to **grow** with our children. Let us not judge them according to the standards of **adult** behavior, but rather, remind us that because they **are** children, they will **act** like children. Do not allow us to **rob** them of the opportunity to wait on **themselves**; to **think**, to **choose**, and to make some **decisions** for themselves. May we grant them all their requests which are **reasonable**, and have the courage always to **withhold** a privilege which we know would be **harmful**. Lord, make us so **fair** and **just**, so **considerate** and **compassionate** to our children, that they will have a genuine **esteem** for us. Make us worthy of being **loved** and **imitated** by our children. Amen.

### **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.**

**Hymn #778 - *“How Shall They Hear, Who Have Not Heard”***

**“How shall they hear,” who have not heard  
News of a Lord who loved and came;  
Nor known his reconciling Word,  
Nor learned to trust a Savior’s name?**

**“To all the world,” to ev’ry place,  
Neighbors and friends and far-off lands,  
Preach the good news of saving grace;  
Go while the Great Commission stands.**

**“Whom shall I send?” Who hears the call,  
Constant in prayer, through toil and pain,  
Telling of One who died for all,  
To bring a lost world home again?**

**“Lord, here am I:” Your fire impart  
To this poor, cold, self-centered soul;  
Touch but my lips, my hands, my heart,  
And make a world for Christ my goal.**

**Spirit of love, within us move:  
Spirit of truth, in pow’r come down!  
So shall they hear and find and prove  
Christ is their life, their joy, their crown.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

**The Blessing:**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

**Hymn #324 - *“Almighty God, Your Word is Cast”***

**Almighty God, your Word is cast  
Like seed into the ground;  
Now let the dew of heav'n descend  
And righteous fruits abound.**

**Let not the foe of Christ and man  
This holy seed remove,  
But give it root in ev'ry heart  
To bring forth fruits of love.**

**Let not the world's deceitful cares  
The rising plant destroy,  
But let it yield a hundredfold  
The fruits of peace and joy.**

**Whene'er the precious seed is sown,  
Life-giving grace bestow  
That all whose souls the truth receive  
Its saving pow'r may know.**