

ORDER OF SERVICE

Holy Communion ELW Setting 7 (red) ~ Thanksgiving Sunday

[* Indicates when the congregation is seated.

Please only stand as able]

[**Bolded** section of text is for congregation to recite]

Music Director: Gloria Berg

Gathering

* Prelude

* Welcome & Announcements

We celebrate this Worship Service: in the name of God, who brought forth bread from the earth, in the name of Jesus, who experienced morning and evening as we do, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who unites us into a living community. Amen.

* Call to Worship

This is a time for giving thanks; a time to be mindful of the good that encircles us.

Thank you, God, for all you have given us!

Friends and family encourage and care, and this community shows us God's loving ways.

Thank you, God, for all you have given us!

We find a home in God's creation and the earth gives us good food to make us grow.

Thank you, God, for all you have given us!

The seasons change. Sunshine comes and goes, yet your loving care for us is eternal.

Thank you, God, for all you have given us!

~ from the Iroquois-Matilda Pastoral Charge

* Children's Choir 'Tell the News' (Tunseth)

* Children's Message

Mark 4:26-29

Then Jesus said, "God's kingdom is like seed thrown on a field by a man who then goes to bed and forgets about it. The seed sprouts and grows—he has no idea how it happens. The earth does it all without his help: first a green stem of grass, then a bud, then the ripened grain. When the grain is fully formed, he reaps—harvest time!

With this story Jesus wants to encourage us to be patient and trust in God. Just as in the growth and development of nature many things happen without our intervention, God is also at work in our lives. It is important to have open eyes and ears for this. Then we will not simply take everything for granted, but learn to marvel and thus discover the small and large 'miracles' of everyday life. One such miracle is the growth of a tree, which we I would like to act out together with you.

Material: Apple Seeds, brown, yellow, blue, green fabric, rose petals and security needles, apples, basket

Have 2 children sit down on the steps, cover them with brown fabric.

It all starts with these little apple seeds, which you can barely see. They probably fell to the ground, in an apple - and as the apple slowly rots and decays, the seeds go into the earth. They rest there for a while. Then the sun comes and warms the ground.

A child places yellow fabric (= sun) on the brown fabric.

And the rain falls, so that the earth becomes moist.

A child comes with a blue fabric (= water) and also places it on the brown fabric.

The seed stirs. A small shoot grows upwards and roots grow downwards to nourish and support this shoot.

Children straighten up and slowly raise their hands upwards. Unfolding the green fabric with petals inward.

The shoot becomes a tree. A lot of time passes. Every year the trunk grows bigger and stronger. Branches and twigs grow at the top. In the meantime, the leaves have also unfolded. The tree has turned green right down to the finest tips.

One day the time has come: buds have grown on the branches and now they are opening, the flowers are unfolding.

Flip green fabric over. Show petals.

The tree is covered all over with white and pink blossoms, the colours glow freshly in the sun and they smell so good. This scent attracts the bees.

Children come as bees and run around buzzing. Have them swirl around coloured scarves.

They visit the tree and land on the flowers to collect the sweet nectar. In doing so, they pollinate the flowers so that fruit can form. Time passes again. The blossoms have disappeared again and small apples grow in their place.

Turn over the green fabric again. Have children hold up apples.

So autumn comes and slowly the apples ripen. They glow yellow and red and seem to laugh at us and call out: 'Pick me, take me down, I'm ripe!' Harvest time is here.

A child comes with a basket and picks the apples.

We are happy about the ripe apples, we want to bite into them and eat some. They taste good and we are grateful for the apples, for everything that goes into making them ripe, and we feel that there is someone who makes everything grow. We celebrate Thanksgiving!

Thank you God for all that grows,

Thank you for the sky's rainbows,
Thank you for the stars that shine,
Thank you for these friends of mine,
Thank you for the moon and sun,
Thank you God for all you've done!
Amen.

Hymn of the Month (blue) ACS 1091 Hallelujah! Sing Praise to Your Creator

- 1 Hallelujah! Sing praise to your Creator,
sun, moon, and stars and angels above.
Praise the Lord, whose word established the heavens,
who upholds all the earth in power and love.
God reigns on high, let the heavens rejoice! (Oh,)
God reigns on high, let the heavens rejoice!
- 2 Praise the Lord, all mountains and oceans,
rolling thunder and wind and storm clouds on high.
Praise the Lord, your Maker, all living creatures,
all the beasts in the fields and birds in the sky.
Both young and old, come and join in the song! (Oh,)
Both young and old, come and join in the song!
- 3 Give to God all glory and honour.
From the depths to the heights let praises resound
to the Lord, the source of strength and salvation
for all people on whom God's favor is found.
Praise God, you saints who are claimed as God's own! (Oh,)
Praise God, you saints who are claimed as God's own!

Text: Tilly Lubis, 1925–2002, based on Psalm 148; tr. David Diephouse, b. 1947. Text © 2009 Faith Alive Christian Resources

Apostolic Greeting (p. 175)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Response: **And also with you.**

Kyrie (p. 175)

Lord, have mercy on us; O Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy on us; O Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy on us; O Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy on us; O Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy on us; O Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy on us; O Lord, have mercy.

Canticle of Praise (p. 176)

Gloria, gloria, gloria, glory to God on high!

Gloria, gloria, gloria, glory to God on high!

And on earth peace to God's people. Glory to God.

And on earth peace to God's people. Glory to God.

Prayer of the Day

God, you care for us like a good mother and a good father. You nourish body and soul. We thank you for all the gifts you have given us this year. Let us not always look at what we do not have. Let us recognise what we don't need. And let us be grateful for what we do have, and share it joyfully. We pray this in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

* **Choir** 'In Gratitude We Come' (Williams/Lantz) Violinist: Cadenza Farina

Word

* **First Reading: Joel 2:21-27**

The First Reading is from the prophet Joel, chapter 2:

²¹Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! ²²Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. ²³O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. ²⁴The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. ²⁵I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. ²⁶You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. ²⁷You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

Response: Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

* **Psalm 126 (sung responsively)**

Psalm 126 is sung responsively:

¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy. Then they said**

among the nations, "The LORD has done great | things for them."

³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,**

like the watercourses | of the Negeb.

⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.

**⁶Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed, will come
again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.**

Gospel Acclamation (p. 179)

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia,

alleluia! alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 6:25-33

Response: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said,] ²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Response: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Hymn (red) ELW 679 For the Fruit of All Creation

- 1 For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.
For these gifts to ev'ry nation,
thanks be to God.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.
- 2 In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

- 3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000. Text © 1970 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

*** Message**

Open our ears, O Lord, to hear your word and know your voice. Speak to our hearts and strengthen us, that we may serve you now and always. Amen.

I love today's gospel lesson from Jesus' sermon on the mount. The picture it paints with the birds in the air and the lilies in the field always gets me. It's a beautiful thought – don't worry, God provides. And yet it's a text that challenges me to the core. Because I worry. I actually worry a lot. I'm worried about the condition of our world, the wars in the Near East, Ukraine, I'm worried about the future of our Evangelical Lutheran Church and of our future here at St. Luke's, I'm worried for the future of my children – will they be able to find their calling and live a life in peace and freedom? But most of all I'm very worried about God's beautiful creation. We already experience more severe or unusual weather conditions. The pictures of burned down parts of Jasper in summer were shocking, we feel with the people in Florida especially as some of you have friends and family there and who doesn't like to spend happy times on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic? We saw floods in Europe and droughts in Africa.

We kind of know that our lifestyle has something to do with climate change, but we are far away from any lifestyle changes. God entrusted his creation to us and what are we doing with it? Exploiting our planet. I know, that changes are hard and I for myself I know exactly how often I fail. When convenience wins over eco-friendliness. When I take the car although I could use my bike, or when I get Take out with lot's of packaging instead of cooking myself. But yes, I'm very worried about the condition of our world, about the future of this world for our children.

And I think, it's okay when my face will frown in moments like this, when I think about the condition of this world. When Jesus tells us in the gospel that we should not worry then he doesn't mean that we shouldn't worry at all. What he is saying here is that we should

worry about the important things, which is everything that has to do with our way of living. We need to ask ourselves: Does our lifestyle contribute to the building of God's kingdom or is it counterproductive? Destroying of our environment is for sure not a building block in God's kingdom.

The gospel tells us: We don't need to worry, because God provides for us. There is food for all of us. There is enough. And now we are coming to the point – it's that little word enough. We have enough, why do we always want more?

A good question to ponder at Thanksgiving. As far as we know, human beings have always given thanks for the fruit of the field and the yield of nature, since times immemorial. Many of our ancient ancestors knew times of scarcity; they knew hunger and want; they knew illness and death because of a lack of food. They knew that enough food for survival was not a given. And so they celebrated with abundance and thankfulness after a good hunting and gathering season, or, later in history, after a good harvest. And because people knew enough food could not be taken for granted, and that the seed would sprout and grow, and they would not know how – they gave thanks for this miraculous provision to their respective gods and goddesses.

We celebrate this Thanksgiving for the harvest here in our church, as many church communities still do today in many places in Europe and North America. But the enthusiasm for this festival has decreased quite a bit. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that, in this day and age, we don't lack anything. We have more than enough of everything. Food is overabundant to the point that we can afford to waste it and throw it away. If there's so much of everything, why be thankful? Do we still understand growth and harvest as a mystical cycle, something we, if we are honest with ourselves, still can't quite explain? That a tiny seed yields a tomato plant, an ear of corn, a big lemon tree? Have we lost the awe of the mysterious provision of all the things we need in life?

But I dare say that, overall, we may have to yet learn again what it means to lead lives full of thanks. In my former congregation in Germany, I once created a Worship Service with confirmation students around the topic 'Thankfulness'. Easy enough I thought, but it wasn't. The young people were especially struggling with the message of the day. What could they say about thankfulness? And the first (and almost only) answer they themselves came up with: It makes people want to do nice things for you if you show your appreciation.

I was just blown away that apparently the next generation sees thankfulness as something that serves them, you know, you better thank grandma for her gift, so that she continues to send more in the future. But then I realized: It's not just that the next generation is a bunch of ungrateful twits. After all, we raised them. *We* are the ones who are their examples, their role models, their teachers. Is it something that we will show those children, that we only give thanks if it serves our needs? Or will we model lives lived in

gratefulness to them? Unfortunately, we tend to focus often on what we don't have instead of taking an honest stock of what we do have, and give thanks for the abundance. Food, shelter, clothing, entertainment options, family, friends. Isn't that something to be deeply thankful for? Shouldn't we say thank you to God, and at the same time wonder why we have been showered with so many good gifts? What we have done to deserve such abundance?

Where comes the worry in then? Well gratitude is the antidote to worry, I quote from an unknown source, because anxiety/worry is grasping for a hold of what we do not have in the future. And gratitude is being thankful for what we do have in the present. For if we chase only after the things we don't have but think we ought to have, and forget to enjoy what's been given to us, we chase the dream of a supposedly better life without truly living in the moment. And we lose the chance to live life to the fullest.

So it is only right and salutary that we should give thanks at all times and in all places. It is only right and appropriate that we should give thanks on this day, as we enjoy the bounty of God's miraculous provisions – and on every day that we experience God's goodness and mercy and blessing – which is, every day.

This would be a good time to say 'amen'. But just one more thought. It is one thing to say thank you to God. But there is more to thanksgiving. Listen to the word: thanks – *giving*. As people of God, we are people called into community. We don't exist by and for ourselves. With every gift comes a responsibility. What we have received we are called to share. That's why, today, not only our sanctuary is decorated with the fruit of the field, but the people of God also give thanks by bringing gifts for the less fortunate ones in society. In September we collected food items and more for Canadian Food for Children and all year round we support Stanley Park Eats with. Thanks so much for everyone who contributed and for your generosity.

We *give* thanks by giving back to God, whom we encounter in our neighbour in need. Let me close with another quote by a great man, John F. Kennedy. He said, 'As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.' To which I say now. Amen.

And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Hymn (red) ELW 879 For the Beauty of the Earth

1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

Refrain

Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

- 2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon and stars of light: *Refrain*
- 3 For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight: *Refrain*
- 4 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above;
for all gentle thoughts and mild: *Refrain*
- 5 For each perfect gift of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
for thyself, best gift divine,
to our world so freely giv'n: *Refrain*

Text: Folliot S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.

Apostles' Creed (p. 217)

With the whole church we confess our Christian faith.

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Response: Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Dave

Rooted in God's abundant love for the world, let us pray for all generations, the church, and all of creation. Each prayer petition ends with the response: 'Merciful God, receive our prayer'.

Time of Silence.

Donna Finch

God, we thank you for the children. We are glad that they are here. We pray to you for them: That you help them to grow in their faith, that you keep them safe and that they build strong bonds with their friends and family. We give you thanks for their free spirits, the laughter and the joy. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Cathy Wilke

God, we thank you for the young people. We are glad that they are here. We pray to you for them: That you are a lamp on their feet in this time of transition between childhood and adulthood. Give strength to those who are struggling with school, performance and peer pressure. We give you thanks for their perception of the world, their curiosity and challenging questions. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Tim Sutton

God, we thank you for the young adults. We are glad that they are here. We pray to you for them: That you give courage to them in times of uncertainty while they are building their own lives. Take them by their hands when they don't know where to go. We give you thanks for their innovative and creative ways of thinking, their energy and perseverance. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Andres Rodriguez

God, we thank you for all those in the midst of life. We are glad that they are here. We pray to you for them: That you embrace them with your love when the everyday stress of juggling work, family, house and finances seems to be too overwhelming. We give you thanks for their work and their willingness to bridge the gap between generations. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Carl Toeller

God, we thank you for all those who have grown older. We are glad that they are here. We pray to you for them: That you are present in transition times from work to retirement. Send healing and comfort to those who struggle with illness and pain. We give you thanks for the time and support they give to their families and for sharing their wisdom. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Anna Sutton

God, we thank you for the very elderly. We are glad that they are here. We pray to you for them: That you break through loneliness and isolation. Make them aware that they can always turn to you. We give you thanks for their life stories from which we can learn so much. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Heike

We praise you for your tender care. Be present with those who weep this day or are in any kind of distress, we pray especially for and those we name in our hearts. Lead them through their sorrow and tears into shouts of joy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Dave

We offer our prayers to you, gracious God, trusting in your boundless love for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace (p. 180)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

Response: **And also with you.**

In the face of a stranger, in the greeting of a friend, we see our Lord, Jesus Christ. In the love of Christ, welcome those around you today with a word of peace.

*** Offering**

***Hand Bell Choir** 'This Is My Father's World' (Beata) and 'With Thanks and Praise' (Wagner)

Hymn (red) ELW 486 God Extends an Invitation (2x)

God extends an invitation
to the table of creation,
where there's wine and light and bread.
Here we gather in thanksgiving
and we offer all our living.
Here the feast of life is spread;
here the feast of life is spread.

Text: Miria T. Kolling; Spanish and English tr. Gerhard M. Cartford, b. 1923. Spanish and English text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress.

Meal

Offering Prayer

With open hands and thankful hearts, we offer to you all that is already yours, O Lord. Everything we possess is a gift from you. You so freely give us what we need. Take what we offer and use it for the goodness of your kingdom. Help us to share generously with others all that you so graciously give to us. **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving (p. 180)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Preface

It is right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Response (p. 181)

Holy, holy, holy Lord God,
God of might and power;
holy is the Lord.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God,
God of might and power;
holy is the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest,
hosanna here on earth.

Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest,
hosanna here on earth.

Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Thanksgiving at the Table

For the power of love in human life and history, we give thanks and praise. Long ago our ancestors knew love's power and they became the tellers of love's tale. Love bound them in covenant, teaching them to live in community with compassion and concern for the most vulnerable among them. Yet centuries of domination and violence shaped a different kind of community based on selfishness and inequality. In the struggle against oppression, Jesus became the face of love, showing us the way to abundant life. In word and deed, he announced love's new reign of justice, reconciliation, and peace. Filled with courage and passion of love's spirit, he gave his life to challenge the unjust systems of this world.

On the night of his betrayal and arrest, as he shared a meal with his friends, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his followers saying: 'Share this bread among you; this is my body which will be broken for justice. Do this to remember me.'

When supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to his friends, saying: 'Share this wine among you; this is my blood which will be shed for liberation. Do this to remember me.'

God of love, spirit of compassion, bless us and this bread and wine. May this meal be food and drink for our journey – renewing, sustaining, and making us whole. When we eat this bread and drink from this cup we experience again the presence of Jesus in our midst. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (p. 182)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation

The table is ready. All are welcome. Come, for the feast is spread.

Words of Distribution for live-stream

The bread of life for all who hunger. The cup of compassion for a broken world.

*** Distribution**

At the direction of the usher(s), communicants come forward, entering the center aisle from both sides and receive the bread from the pastor and then proceed to take wine from the common cup or an individual cup from the tray closest to the pew you are sitting in (used cups are placed in baskets right beside the Worship Assistant). Individuals not receiving communion are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing.

*** O Lamb of God (p. 182)**

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us your peace, grant us your peace.

*** Communion Hymns (red) ELW 681, 689, 881**

Table Blessing

May this meal nourish us and refresh us, may it strengthen us and renew us, may it unite us and keep us in God's gracious love, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Holy God, you have welcomed us to this meal and fed us with dignity at your table. Send us now to welcome others and to be at peace with one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sending

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace. **Amen.**

Hymn (red) ELW 840 Now Thank We All Our God

- 1 Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who, from our mothers' arms,
has blest us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.
- 2 Oh, may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us all in grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all harm
in this world and the next.
- 3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heav'n adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Follow Jesus! **Thanks be to God.**

*** Postlude**

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