



“³⁰He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

~Mark 4:30-32

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Third Sunday after Pentecost – June 14, 2015

PO Box 411

Mars, PA 16046-0411

www.stjohnchurchmars.org

Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

Rev. Robert Newpher, Interim Pastor

Matt Claus, Pianist

*We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church. We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning. Should you have no permanent church-home in this community, why not consider making this one your own? Please sign the guest book as you leave worship today or the attendance pad in the pew. You are most welcome here at St. John! Most elements of our service can be found in the bulletin, everything else is in the hymnal. Page refers to the numbered pages towards the front of the hymnal, hymns are bold and towards the back. Please rise when there is an *, congregational responses are in **bold**, and underlined elements of the service are found in the hymnal.*

HOLY COMMUNION

Third Sunday after Pentecost – June 14, 2015

The mustard seed becomes a great shrub that shelters the birds, recalling ancient images of the tree of life. We'd expect a cedar or a sequoia, but Jesus finds the power of God better imaged in a tiny, no-account seed. It's not the way we expect divine activity to look. Yet the tree of life is here, in the cross around which we gather, the tree into which we are grafted through baptism, the true vine that nourishes us with its fruit in the cup we share. It may not appear all that impressive, but while nobody's looking it grows with a power beyond our understanding.

Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea, died 379; Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, died around 385; Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishop of Constantinople, died around 389; Macrina, theologian, died around 379

The Cappadocian fathers, as the three men in this group are known, explored the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Basil's monastic rule forms the basis for Eastern monastic life. Gregory of Nazianzus defended orthodox Christianity in Constantinople. Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's younger brother, wrote on the spiritual life. Macrina, older sister of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, was the leader of a community dedicated to asceticism, meditation, and prayer.

PRELUDE: *Waiting for Messiah* – Robert W. Thygerson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father,
and of the + Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open ,all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hid:
cleans the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,
**we confess that we are captive to sin
and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;**

**we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,
so that we may delight in your will
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God,
Jesus Christ was given to die for us,
and for his sake God forgives us all our sins.
As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ,
and by his authority,
I therefore declare to you
the entire forgiveness of all your sins,
in the name of the Father,
and of the + Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG #524: *What is This Place

***GREETING**

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

***GLORY TO GOD**



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra-cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

**O God, you are the tree of life,
offering shelter to all the world.**

**Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth,
that we may bear your truth and love to those in need,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Tree imagery is used in a messianic prophecy to tell how the Lord will choose someone from Judah's royal family (the cedar tree) to reign over all creation. This tree will be planted on Mount Zion, the location of the holy temple.

²²Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

²³On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 92

1. To give you thanks, O Lord, is good; To
2. On psal - ter - y and on the lyre, with
3. The just shall flour - ish like a palm, and
4. They shall bear fruit in their old age; they

praise your Name, Most High is right; To tell your love at
mel - o - dy of harp and voice. For your acts make me
like a ce - dar spread a - broad. Those plant - ed in the
shall be suc - cu - lent and green; that they may show how

break of day, Pro - claim your faith - ful - ness at night.
glad, O Lord; be - cause of your works, I re - joice.
house of God shall flour - ish there be - fore the Lord.
just is God, my Rock, in whom no fault is seen.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13) 14-17

Paul encourages believers to live by faith and not by sight. We do not consider Jesus from a human perspective but through the eyes of faith, believing he died for all and was raised. All who are in Christ are now in God's new creation.

⁶So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

***GOSPEL READING: Mark 4:26-34**

Jesus frequently uses parables to teach ordinary people as they are able to hear and understand. Images of sowing and growing show the vitality of God's kingdom.

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁶He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY #679: *For the Fruit of All Creation

***NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting the Spirit's power, we pray for the church, the world, and all of God's creation.

Gracious God, you reveal yourself in word and water, bread and wine. Show us your will as we worship and send us forth as signs of unexpected grace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Life-giving God, the trees sing of your faithfulness. Give growth to trees and shrubs, grasses and all flowering things, that their beauty may flourish for their sakes and ours. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of wisdom, you provide for all peoples and nations. We pray for governments and international organizations, for all who shelter refugees and strive for peace and justice. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of love, you know our hurts and failings. We pray for those who are homeless, unemployed, imprisoned, hungry, and sick, especially Nan, Jim, Robert, Frieda, Kathy, Jim, Raymond, Wanda Jean, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Fred & Jane, and David & Ellen. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, you prosper the work of our hands. We pray for the outreach ministries of this congregation and for our new pastor. We trust your Spirit moving through and among us even when we do not see the fruits of our labors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We remember in thanksgiving the saints who have gone before us especially Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Macrina. Anchor us in the triune God, confident in the abundant life you promise. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, gracious God, and those prayers known only to you. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING



OFFERTORY HYMN :God, Whose Farm is All Creation

(Please stand for the final stanza as the gifts are brought forward.)

1. God, whose farm is all cre - a - tion, take the grat - i - tude we give;
2. Take our plow - ing, seed - ing, reap - ing, hopes and fears of sun and rain,
3. All our la - bor, all our watch - ing, all our cal - en - dar of care

take the fin - est of our har - vest, crops we grow that we may live.
all our think - ing, plan - ning wait - ing, rip - ened in this fruit and grain.
in these crops of your cre - a - tion, take, O God: they are our prayer.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you,
and you open your hand in blessing.

Fill us with good things at your table,
that we may come to the help of all in need,
through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord.

Amen.

***DIALOGUE**

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 our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE**

It is indeed 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 Savior 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:

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God,

our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,
in the harmonious world of your creation,
the plants and animals,
the seas and stars
were whole and well in your praise.

When sin had scarred the world,
you sent your Son to heal our ills
and to form us again into one.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,
his acts of healing,
his body given up,
and his victory over death,
we await that day when all the peoples of the earth
will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

Send your Spirit upon us and this meal:
as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,
so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth,

that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever. **Amen.**

***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.**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Jesus said, "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

COMMUNION SONG: *Lamb of God*



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION HYMN #471: *Let Us Break Bread Together*

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in grace.

Amen.

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Wise and generous God,

we thank you that at this holy table
you have fed us again
with the food of everlasting life.
Send us with your blessing
to seek the good of our neighbor
and call others to your feast;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

***BLESSING**

Almighty and merciful God,
Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve, and keep you
this day and forevermore
Amen.

SENDING SONG #547: *Sent Forth by God's Blessing

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Live in love, as Christ loved us.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Nearer, My God, to Thee* – arr. Joel Raney

The flowers this week are given by Cindy and Dave Knauff for the glory of God.

9:00 am

Assisting Minister: Christine Dishong

Communion Assistant:

Acolyte: Danielle Dishong

Usher: Bob Dishong

Attendance Last Week: 50

Weekly Budgeted Need: \$ 2,755.44

YTD Budgeted Expenses: \$ 66,130.62

YTD Actual Expense: \$ 64,880.11

Attendance last year: 59

Last Week's Giving: \$ 3,526.71

Year to Date Receipts: \$63,214.05

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