

Prairieland Parish

As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God

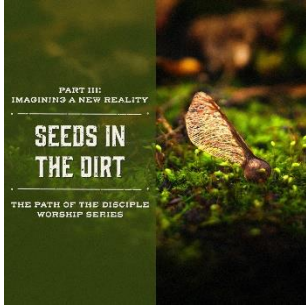
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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome

Announcements – Joys/Concerns



Opening Meditation

Every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer and invite God’s kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, we are engaging in an act of imagination and visioning. Any time that we claim something of the prophetic vision or embrace a kingdom image of how we could be living in beloved community together, we are imagining a new reality.

This is a disciple’s task. We are called to see more than simply what is — not that disciples ignore the world as it is. We are not called to be “so heavenly minded that we are not earthly good”! No, we do live in the world that is. But we also hold out hope, a living, driving, motivating hope for what could be. For what is promised. We lean into the promises of God with joy and with confidence, even as we recognize how far we still must go to reach that mountaintop.

And Folks remember, there is optimism to the disciple’s path, a destination always in mind and heart as we move through the world. These aren’t rose-colored glasses that make things look better than they are, but a certainty that the church is still a force for good in the world, that justice is still within reach as hearts and minds and behaviors are changed. And that there is a God who will bring the new reality into being in and through us and sometimes despite us.

That means we work for the winning side. Just think, what could we accomplish if we were certain we wouldn’t fail? What invitations could we issue, what hope could we offer, what joy could we share if we could see the new reality God has in store for all of creation? It all begins with the ability to imagine a new reality.

A Call to Worship

Come, let us worship God!

Come, let us worship our Creator!

God is the great Sower, scattering seeds of life and abundance across the earth.

We are the soil the Sower plants, created to nurture and sustain the seeds of God’s life-giving love.

God is the great Gardener, tilling and cultivating our soil with love and grace.

We notice the rocks and thorns in our soil and call on the Gardener's love and grace to transform us into good soil.

God is the great Life-giver, sowing seeds and tending the soil to produce the fruit of abundant life. May we nurture and grow God's new reality, bearing the fruit of flourishing and abundance for all God's creation.

OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation. Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Praise Hymn UMH #374 "Standing on the Promises" (verses 1-3)

Author: Russell Kelso Carter (1886)

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**1 Standing on the promises of Christ, my King,
Through eternal ages let his praises ring;
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God.**

Refrain:

**Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God, my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I'm standing on the promises of God.**

**2 Standing on the promises that cannot fail.
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God. [Refrain]**

**3 Standing on the promises of Christ, the Lord,
Bound to him eternally by love's strong cord,
Overcoming daily with the Spirit's sword,
Standing on the promises of God. [Refrain]**

Gospel Reading..... Matthew 13:1-9 (NRSV)

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, 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 brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 If you have ears,[a] hear!"

The Parable of the Sower Explained

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 is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on 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 such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.[a] 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this[b] age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."
This is the Word of God, for the people of God, **Thanks be to God!**

Children's Sermon

Faith Hymn UMH#600 "Wonderful Words of Life"

Author: Philip P. Bliss (1874)

**1. Sing them over again to me,
wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see,
wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty
teach me faith and duty.**

Refrain:

**Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.**

**2. Christ, the blessed one, gives to all
wonderful words of life;
sinner, list to the loving call,
wonderful words of life;
all so freely given,
wooing us to heaven.
(Refrain)**

**3. Sweetly echo the gospel call,
wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all,
wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior,
sanctify forever. (Refrain)**

Message

Prayers of the People

Loving God, we thank you for the ministry of this church. We remember the light this church has been in the neighborhood. All we do as your disciples to bring life and liveliness to our community.*

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all you have done among us.

We thank you for the gift we have been to one another. We remember the Sunday school teachers, mentors, and pastors who shaped us and formed us in Christian love. We recall the saints who have gone before yet whose care and influence are still so present.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all you have done among us.

We thank you for your provision that never runs out. We attend to your call out of scarcity and into abundance as well as your assurance that we can depend on you, the God who provides. We notice that our community has so much need, and we trust that you will provide the way for us to meet those needs when we follow your voice.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all you are doing among us.

We thank you for the gifts you are nurturing among us now. We notice the Spirit at work among your people, bringing forth gifts of compassion, justice, cooking, caring for children, really excellent hugs, and kind, encouraging words. We are learning to celebrate the gifts we have rather than despair of the gifts we think we ought to have.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all you are doing among us.

We thank you for the dreams you give us, dreams of a new reality where all people can thrive as a community brought together in love. We welcome your invitation to imagine how God-given abundance could transform our neighborhood. Your dream is good and beautiful, even when it feels daunting.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all you will do among us.

We thank you for the ways you guide us into new expressions of your love in the world. We grieve for the ideas and ministries that gave life in the past that we now set aside to make room for new imaginings to take root. We rejoice that you continue to journey with us as we imagine a new reality into being, because nothing is impossible with God.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for all you will do among us.

Let us come to the Lord this day in voice and prayer as we unite saying: Our Father...

Offertory/Doxology/ Offertory Prayer

Creator God from whom all blessings grow: as we dedicate our tithes and offerings, we acknowledge that you have blessed us to be the fertile soil from which the good news of your kingdom will spring forth. Move us, we pray, beyond seeing our role as passive or powerless, depending totally on the quality of the seed and the expertise of the planter. Remind us that you are counting on us for fruitfulness, demonstrating for the world your love, grace, and power as we bear fruit that eases the suffering sick, feeds the hungry, brings justice to the oppressed and love and compassion to those who feel disconnected or forgotten. In Christ, we pray. Amen. (Matt 13:1-9, 18-23)

Departing Hymn UMH # 664 "Sent Forth by God's Blessing!"

Author: Omer Westendorf (1964)

Harmonizer: Leland Sateren (1972)

Copyright: Harm. © 1972 Contemporary Worship 4: Hymns for Baptism and Holy Communion

**I Sent forth by God's blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.**

**The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.**

**2 With praise and thanksgiving
to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human 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.**

SENDING FORTH

Beloved, remember: you are dirt. May you go forth and receive the Gardener's tending so that we may all become good soil ready to receive, nurture, and grow the seed of the gospel wherever we go. Amen.

Postlude