

Matthew 13:23a

“As for what was sown on good soil this is the one who hears the Word and understands it.”



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray,

C: Richly inspire us, O Lord, to consider and accomplish what You see is good. For we know that we cannot live without You, but that with You, we shall prevail. And so, we pray through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

Isaiah 55:10-13

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Psalmody for the Day *(read responsively)*

Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-14

¹You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to You shall vows be performed in Jerusalem.

²To You that hear prayer shall all flesh come, because of their transgressions.

³Our sins are stronger than we are, but You will blot them out.

⁴Happy are they whom You choose and draw to Your courts to dwell there! They will be satisfied by the beauty of Your house, by the holiness of Your temple.

⁵Awesome things will You show us in Your righteousness, O God of our salvation,
O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away.

⁶You make fast the mountains by Your power; they are girded about with might.

⁷You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

⁸Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at Your marvelous signs; You make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.]

⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; You make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water.

¹⁰You prepare the grain, for so You provide for the earth.

¹¹You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain You soften the ground and bless its increase.

¹²You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths overflow with plenty.

¹³May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy.

¹⁴May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.

Second Reading

Romans 8:12-17

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*The Gospel Acclamation (*sung*)

(ELW) page 142

C: Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

* The Gospel

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung after announcement of the Gospel)

C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung after conclusion of the Gospel)

Sermon

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

*The Hymn of the Day

Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil

(ELW) No. 512

*The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting. Amen.

*The Prayers of the Church (response)

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

*Sharing of the Peace

The Musical Offering

*The Offertory

Create in Me a Clean Heart

(ELW) No. 188

*The Lord's Prayer

C: 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.

Announcements

*The Benediction (*sung response*)

C: Amen, Amen, Amen.

*The Recessional Hymn

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

(ELW) No. 536

*The Dismissal (*response*)

C: Thanks be to God.

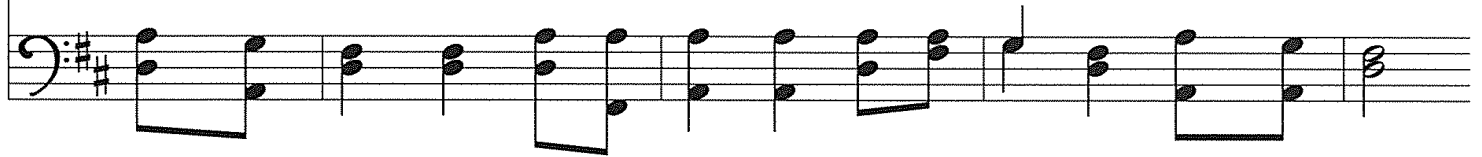
Postlude

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

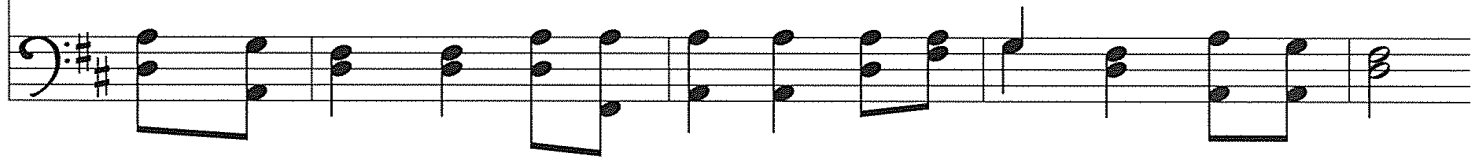
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1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless - ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith - er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con - strained to be;



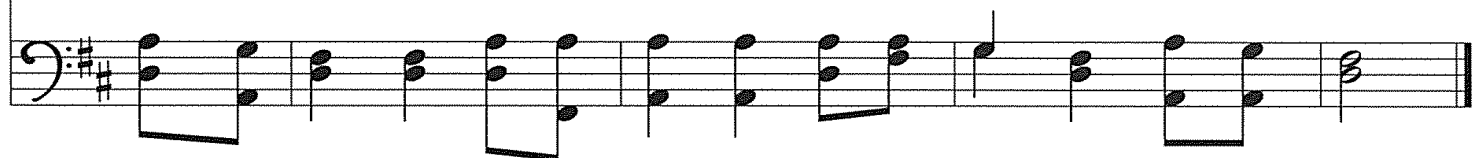
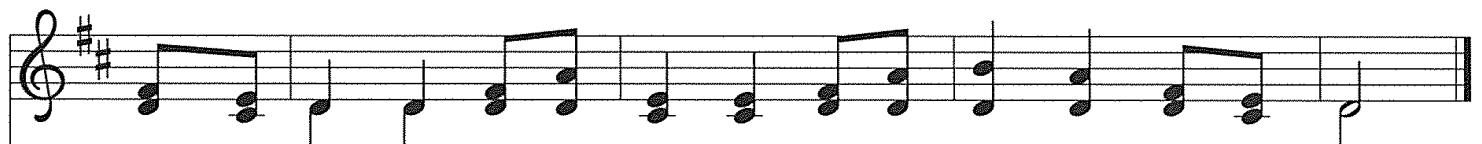
streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan - d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end - less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan - d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good - ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.



When Peace like a River

It Is Well with My Soul

785

1 When peace like a riv - er at - tend - eth my way, when
2 Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, let
3 He lives—oh, the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought; my
4 Lord, has - ten the day when our faith shall be sight, the

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - ev - er my lot, thou hast
this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ hath re - gard - ed my
sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I
clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trum - pet shall sound and the

taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.
help - less es - tate, and hath shed his own blood for my soul.
bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
Lord shall de - scend; e - ven so it is well with my soul.

Refrain

It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul,

Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil

512



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.

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right

The first system of music features a treble and bass staff in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are: "Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right".

spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your

The second system continues the melody. The lyrics are: "spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your".

pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -

The third system continues the melody. The lyrics are: "pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -".

store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,

The fourth system continues the melody. The lyrics are: "store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,".

and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

The fifth system concludes the piece. The lyrics are: "and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.".

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

536

1 God be with you till we meet a - gain; by good coun-sels guide, up - hold you,
2 God be with you till we meet a - gain; ho - ly wings se - cure - ly hide you,
3 God be with you till we meet a - gain; when life's per - ils thick con-found you,

with a shep-herd's care en - fold you;
dai - ly man - na still pro - vide you; God be with you till we meet a - gain.
put un - fail - ing arms a - round you;

Refrain

Till we meet, till we meet, till we
till we meet, till we meet a - gain,

meet at Je - sus' feet; till we meet, till we
till we meet, till we meet, till we

meet, God be with you till we meet a - gain.
meet a - gain,

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Dennis Schmidt, Lutheran Lay Worship Leader

J. Judson Lacko, Lutheran Lay Worship Leader

The Flowers on the Chancel are given to the glory of God in memory of Fred Dupas and Fred Grewe, dad's of Pr. Rob and Kimberly for being positive role models and loving and caring men. A donation is made to the church by Pastor Rob.

The Lay Reader is Lisa Maust.

Acolytes are Denico and Heidi Walsh.

Counters/Greeters today are L. Coleman and D. Schmidt.

Welcome to our Visitors! The people of this congregation welcome you as you join us in worship this morning. Please sign the register, located in the narthex. If you have questions, please see the pastor or contact the church office.

Do you wish to become a member of First Lutheran Church? Please contact Pastor Grewe.

Nursery: We welcome all children to be a part of worship, but we realize that sometimes the service can be too long for the little ones. We have a nursery for those attending to the needs of infants and small children. There is a speaker in the nursery so that parents can still hear the service. You are welcome to use the nursery for the entire service, or just a small part.

Bell Choir Practice on Monday at 6 PM.

The Flower Chart for 2023 is posted in the narthex. If you wish to place flowers, (real or artificial) near the altar, sign your name opposite the date of your choice. You will be reminded of your date and asked for the wording you want in the bulletin two weeks before the due date.

Sign-up sheets are posted to host a coffee hour in 2023. Please write your names under the month you would like to host. The coffee hours have been a wonderful time of fellowship and the hosts have been awesome! Thank you!!

Sign-up sheets are posted for Lay Readers in 2023. Please sign up.

Please remember to continue contributing donations to our girls in Ethiopia.
Please consider this as a call to help others in need.

Please pray for those in need of healing:

Janet Burke, Shari Kienzle, Susan Westott, baby Isaac Christian, the Pollana family, Sylvia Sunstrum, Fritz Group, Rosemary Dittman, Eric Group, Danielle Sherman, Amy Verderber, Tillie and Larry, and Lou Mayne.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

PA Mental health support and referral line

1-855-284-2494

WASHINGTON, PA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE

1-877-225-3567

WASHINGTON COUNTY BHDS LINE

724-228-6832

SCOTT BERRY DIRECT LINE

724-250-4079 (FOR CHURCH MEMBERS ONLY)

FOR OTHER NEEDS, CONTACT 211 OR THE CHURCH.

Church Offering Change: Our ushers will pass the plates around during the Musical Offering.

Listening for the Promise
Weekly Devotional
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 16, 2023

“Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” -Matthew 13:8-9-

In the parable from which these words are taken, Jesus compares preaching God's word to sowing seed on four types of soil: 1) hard soil, 2) rocky soil, 3) thorny soil, and 4) good soil. In the parable, the sower is the preacher; the seed is God's word, and the four types of soil represent four conditions of the human heart. The hard soil represents a hard heart that God's word cannot penetrate. The rocky soil represents a shallow heart that receives God's word but does not allow it to put down roots. The thorny soil represents a worldly heart that receives God's word but then chokes it out by worldly busyness before it can grow and bear fruit. Finally, the good soil represents a soft heart that receives God's word, and allows it to put down roots, grow, and bear fruit.

The purpose of the parable is to explain why some people respond to Jesus' parables while others don't. Thus, this parable is self-reflexive since it is a parable about parables that provides a lens for understanding the preaching and mixed reception of parables. In this regard, Jesus tells His disciples that he teaches in parables both to reveal and to conceal the truth. Sadly, however, this important section (vv. 10-17) has been excised from the lectionary reading, perhaps due to a condescending fear that lay people cannot handle the mysteries of election and predestination.

The good news, however, is that the condition of the human heart is not constant! One who rejects God's word today may well receive it tomorrow! After all, due to original sin, we are all like the hard, rocky, and/or thorny soil by nature. But our hearts have been changed by the Spirit working through the word. In this regard, Scripture tells us that God's word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword (see Heb. 4:12). So, even if someone's heart is hardened to God's word today, this very word has the power to soften her heart tomorrow!

As we preach God's word, there is both an outer and an inner revelation. We preach God's word to the human person from without. But God's Spirit works through this word, when, where, and how he pleases, to convict the heart within. Thus, Jesus' parable is diagnostic of present reality but not determinative of future reality. This should make us bold to preach!