

Date: July 16, 2023
Season of the Holy Spirit

Prayer of Preparation

Franz Joseph Hayden

Lord, only you can make me good ground. Please let your planting be ample and let me follow and free to receive your Word. I will spend some time now imagining myself as fertile soil. Amen.

Gathering in the Presence of God

**Please stand as able, in body or in spirit*

Gathering Music

Prelude and Fugue in F Major J.S. Bach

Welcome

***Call to Worship** (responsively)

Liturgist

God scatters the seeds of reconciliation and love, and waits....

So much of it lands on flat pathways or rocky roads and won't take root....

God scatters the seeds of healing and hope, and waits....

Shallowness and fear claim the seeds and they cannot live.

God scatters the seeds of redemption and peace, and waits....

These are the places of deep growth where the seed will cast down strong roots.

May our hearts be the rich soil in which God's love takes root. Amen.

***Hymn**

In the Bulb There Is a Flower
Hymn of Promise

GTG 250

Confessing Our Separation from God (unison)

Liturgist

Loving God, Sower, and Reaper of love, it is difficult for us to believe that we can be fruitful, good soil for your words and work. We admit to you that we are thorny stony fields, capable of growing goodness and sharing it around, but also prone to allow goodness to wither and weeds to flourish...we are not half as smart as we pretend we are...we are not anywhere near as loving as we want to be. Your mercy has taken root in us, but we do not share enough of it with others. Most loving God, please open the channels of our lives to receive again the seeds of your Gospel. Rain your mercy upon us, shine your warmth and light into every dark place, and bring forth in us not the harvest we deserve but the harvest that in your glorious love you have purposed for us. Through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen!

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Jesus, Draw Me Close

Rick Founds

Jesus, draw me close; Closer, Lord, to You.
Let the world around me fade away.
Jesus, draw me close;
Closer, Lord, to You.
For I desire to worship and obey.

***Passing the Peace of Christ**

We Hear God's Word

Prayer of Illumination

Liturgist

Anthem

God Bless America
Soloist: Ric Fernandes

Irving Berlin

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

Liturgist

Source: NRSV

Reflection

Willy-Nilly Sower

We Respond to God's Word

***Affirmation of Faith**

I Believe in Jesus

Marc Nelson

Joys and Hopes of the People of God

Offertory:

Fanfare on "Lauda Anima

Lani Smith/John Goss

The Act of Gratitude

***Doxology: An Expression of Faith to God**

GTG 606

Tune: Old Hundredth

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

***Prayer of Thanksgiving** (unison)

Liturgist

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. (Source: Matt 13:1-9, 18-23)

We Follow God's Word into the World

***Hymn**

Come, Labor On

GTG 719

***Benediction**

Postlude

Rondeau (Suite No. 1, Sinfonies de Fanfare

Jean J. Mouret

Next Week's Liturgist: Carol Pillsbury