

## Order of Worship for July 3, 2022

### Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**Opening Hymn: “Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying” - Hymn #826**

### Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit to a yoke of slavery; do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence.

**C: If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

P: Most merciful God,

**C: we confess that we have sinned. We have used our freedom only to fulfill our selfish desires. We have gone back to trusting in the idols of this world; power, wealth, success. We have too often been of the world, instead of just in it. We have forgotten that our true citizenship is in heaven. Forgive us.**

P: According to the will of God our Father, Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins to set us free. In His name and by His authority, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### Service of the Word

#### Entrance Psalm:

P: The heavens declare the glory of God,

**C: and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.**

P: Day to day pours out speech,

**C: and night to night reveals knowledge.**

P: Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

**C: In them He has set a tent for the sun,**

P: which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,

**C: and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.**

P: Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,

**C: and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: The heavens declare the glory of God,  
**C: and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.**

P: The Lord be with you.  
**C: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day:**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, You have built Your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send Your messengers to preserve Your people in true peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 66:10-14**

R: "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance." For this is what the LORD says: "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem." When you see this, your heart will rejoice and you will flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, but his fury will be shown to His foes.

R: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**The Epistle Lesson: Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18**

R: Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load.

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

R: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn of Praise: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" - Hymn #649**

**The Holy Gospel Lesson: Luke 10:1-20**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory be to You, O Lord**

P: After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

"Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.

"He who listens to you listens to Me; He who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name."

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise be to You, O Christ.**

**Nicene Creed** (on screen)

**Sermon Hymn:** *"O Christ, Who Called the Twelve"* – **Hymn # 856**

**Sermon:** *"Harvest Workers"* - **Luke 10:1-20**

One of the most enduring stories of the American Revolution is the story of Paul Revere's ride. This ride was made famous by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem;

Listen, my children, and you shall hear

Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,

On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:

Hardly a man is now alive

Who remembers that famous day and year.

As the British were massing to find the revolutionaries and confiscate their weapons, there was uncertainty over which way they would go. The revolutionaries decided to have Paul Revere wait across the bay, and look for a light in the Old North Church, where a sexton friendly to the revolutionary cause would put up lanterns to show how the British were coming; one if by land, two if by sea. Paul Revere sets out on his horse, warning those along his way that the British are coming. The revolutionaries gathered at Lexington and Concord and fought the British, beginning the American Revolutionary War.

Now, of course, the story from the poem doesn't quite tell the whole story. Paul Revere wasn't the only rider; William Dawes rode along with Paul Revere, and Samuel Prescott joined them later. Others went out and brought the warning to others as they went along. Among the lessons we can learn from realizing that more people than just Paul Revere made that ride are this; there are some jobs you can't do on your own.

That seems to be the case as well as we hear today's Gospel lesson, of Jesus sending out seventy-two disciples, saying "The kingdom is coming!" Their message comes not as a warning, but as an announcement of joy, an announcement of freedom, an announcement of blessing.

But let's begin at the beginning. "After this," the text begins. After what? If we look back at the previous chapter of Luke's gospel, we see that Jesus had announced his coming rejection by the religious leaders and his death and resurrection, and had "set his face to go to Jerusalem." As Pastor Mark reminded us last week, Jesus had set his path in a stubborn way to head to Jerusalem, to head to the cross, and nothing was going to move him from that path. That is the context of the work the seventy two disciples are called to do. They are to go ahead of Jesus to the towns he will come to on his way to what will certainly look like the failure of his cause, announcing that "the kingdom of God has come near to you." That suggests that this "kingdom of God" is not a typical kingdom.

The idea of kingdoms is strange for us anyway, especially close to the Fourth of July. Kings and kingdoms seem like archaic concepts to us today. Even in those nations that still have kings or queens; they're pretty much symbolic figures. Queen Elizabeth II, who just celebrated her Platinum Jubilee, is a good example of that. But we can't avoid language about the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of heaven, which means the same thing) in the gospels. And every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask that God's kingdom would come. What does that mean?

Now, it's important to remember that when Jesus uses the kingdom of God, he's not describing some sort of theocratic monarchy. He's not describing a physical kingdom. It's not a kingdom of this world. But it's a kingdom in this world. The kingdom of God is where God's rule is active. That's why, when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray not only for God's kingdom to come, but for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Where God's will is done is where God is recognized as being in control. Where God's will is done, that's where God's kingdom is.

And God's kingdom doesn't come the way other kingdoms or nations come into being. God's kingdom doesn't come into being through war or rebellion or conquest or exploration. God's

kingdom doesn't come through politics or games of thrones. It comes through God's power alone.

The disciples are not just to announce that the kingdom of God will show up at some time in the future. Instead, they are to say that it "has come near to you." With that, they are echoing the words that Jesus himself used when he began his ministry. It sounds as if the announcement itself brings the kingdom near. God's word does what it says it does.

When the seventy two returned, they were giddy with surprise that Jesus' promises proved trustworthy. Jesus' decisive response to this enthusiasm was to redirect their attention from their worldly success to the heavenly cause of the mission. Yet despite this rebuke, Jesus is happy for them, encouraged by them.

The harvest is plentiful. This confidence seems misplaced at a time when the Church's survival is in question. We hear headlines about how fewer people believe in God, and fewer people are going to church. So why the confidence?

Jesus said the harvest was plentiful even as his group of followers numbered in the double digits. As Jesus' command to pray to the Lord of the Harvest indicates, conversion is God's work and not the result of human "reason and strength". We pray because God alone converts hearts to desire to follow Christ.

When we pray to the Lord to send out laborers into his harvest, what, exactly, do we pray about? We pray to the Lord Jesus, because it is his harvest that we are thinking of. We pray for unbelievers, that they might hear the Word of God, know Jesus' love, and receive his forgiveness. And we pray for the mission of Christ's church, that people would recognize the need for the Gospel to be proclaimed and answer his call for workers in the harvest. We also pray that the Lord would give us eyes to recognize the need and consider joining in this work.

That is the strange irony of Jesus' prayer. He tells his disciples, the church—us—to pray for more workers to enter into the harvest. But then he calls his disciples to answer that very prayer. "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest," says Jesus, "to send out laborers into his harvest." And then he immediately calls his apostles and sends them into the harvest field. The church prays this prayer, and the church answers this prayer. We pray the prayer and we answer it.

When we share our faith with others in conversation or pray for the spread of the Gospel, we are actually scattering seeds that God uses to grow faith in people's hearts. And then at the right time, when they are ready and the harvest is plentiful, God can use us, or others, to reap the harvest. We don't convert people—God does that. He takes care of the growing and maturing of faith.

The harvest Jesus talked about was the coming of the Kingdom of God, the gathering of many people into the barn of Christ's church. It was a big job, an overwhelming task. Starting with a group of 12, or 72, seems like a small place to start. But from those simple beginnings came the billions of Christians around the world today, including you and me.

We, too, don't know when seeds of faith will be ready to be harvested. We don't know if faith will be knee high by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, or how to measure it. We do know that God is in control of the growth. The harvest is plentiful. And so is God's love.

**Prayer of the Church**

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

**Offering/Voluntary:**

**Service of the Sacrament**

**Invitation to Communion:**

P: Christ Jesus sent His disciples out to proclaim the coming of His Kingdom. His Kingdom continues to come as He comes to people through His body, the Church. In this Church He offers Himself, His true body and blood, for the forgiveness of sins. He invites us to gather by His altar and receive this holy supper trusting in His promises. We join now in the Holy Communion.

**The Words of our Lord:**

**Lord's Prayer:**

**Distribution Hymns:**

*"Spread the Reign of God the Lord"* - **Hymn # 830**

*"Before You, Lord, We Bow"* - **Hymn # 966**

**Dismissal (Pastor)**

**Prayer after Communion:**

P: God of glory, Father of love, peace comes from You alone. Send us as peacemakers and witnesses to Your Kingdom, and fill our hearts with joy in Your promises of salvation, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing: (Pastor)**

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: "God Bless Our Native Land" - Hymn # 965**

**Postlude:**