

Worship Plan for Sunday, June 17, 2018

Lectionary 11

Proper 6

4th Sunday after Pentecost

ELW Holy Communion Setting One

Sunday, June 17, 2018

Introduction to the day

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.

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

The reading may be announced:

A reading from Ezekiel.

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 reading may be concluded:

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15

The righteous shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon. (Ps. 92:12)

¹It is a good thing to give thanks | to the LORD,
to sing praise to your name, | O Most High;
²**to herald your love | in the morning
and your faithful- | ness at night;**
³on the psaltery, and | on the lyre,

and to the melody | of the harp.

**⁴For you have made me glad by your | acts, O LORD;
and I shout for joy because of the works | of your hands. R**

¹²The righteous shall flourish | like a palm tree,
and shall spread abroad like a ce- | dar of Lebanon.

**¹³Those who are planted in the house | of the LORD
shall flourish in the courts | of our God;**

¹⁴they shall still bear fruit | in old age;
they shall be | green and succulent;

**¹⁵that they may show how up- | right the LORD is,
my rock, in whom there is | no injustice. R**

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17

The reading may be announced:

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

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 reading may be concluded:

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Mark 4:26-34

The gospel is announced.

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

²⁶[Jesus] 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; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, we join with the church in every place, praying for the world that God so loves.

A brief silence.

O Most High, your divine realm is like a noble tree whose boughs and branches give shade and rest to the peoples of the earth. Make your church a nesting place for all who need your peace and healing. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, all the world is a garden for your creativity. Refresh places of drought with abundant rains. Strengthen and keep safe those who fight fires in your forests. Help us tend your mountains and plains, oceans and rivers with loving care. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, you speak and your word is accomplished. Speak to the leaders of the nations so they might end cycles of violence, giving people everywhere tranquility and peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Bring the abundant healing blessings of the new creation into the lives of those who suffer illness or deprivation of any kind (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, your steadfast love and faithfulness sustain your people. Bless fathers and all father figures with such love and faithfulness that

children flourish and grow in uprightness and joy. Bless those who long to be fathers and those for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

O Most High, just as the earth produces of itself and the harvest comes, you gather up your people from all times and places. Bring us along with those who have died (*especially*) into the lasting harvest of your kingdom. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

By the sure guidance of your Holy Spirit, O God, we lift up our prayers in trust and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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