

**7th Sunday after Pentecost  
Sunday, July 16, 2023  
Pastor - Rev. Janel Kuester  
Organist/Music Director - Lori Free**

Organ Prelude and Pastor's Greeting

Opening Hymn: **#574 Here I Am, Lord**

Order of Worship: pages 94-96, 147-150

Prayer of the Day - Celebrate

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

Psalm: Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

*Response after the announcement:* **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Response after the conclusion:* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon:

Hymn of the Day: **#732 Morning Cry**

Apostle's Creed: page 105 (see inside back cover of hymnal)

Prayers of Intercession - Celebrate

Offertory: Hymn 186 in Service Music - "Create in me..."

Words of Institution and Communion

Lord's Prayer (see inside back cover of hymnal)

Communion Hymn: **#508 As Rain From the Clouds**

Sending Song: **#543 Go, My Children, with My Blessing**

Dismissal

**WELCOME TO ALL VISITORS  
CELEBRATING OUR 141st YEAR  
IN HIS SERVICE  
1882 - 2023**

Pastor Janel Kuester has been serving in a small town-rural congregation on the Minnesota prairie - Christ Lutheran Church in Cottonwood – for six years. She served three other congregations in the Saint Paul Area Synod as an ordained Pastor and one as a lay leader, prior to moving back closer to home. She is a second career pastor with an elementary teaching degree where she taught for several years before moving to adult learners for eight years when she worked at a corporate company offering computer and soft skill training courses. During seminary, she worked at the State of Minnesota Board of Barbers and Cosmetologist Examiner's office as a Database Project Manager and built her own small HR and Bookkeeping business. Almost every evening, you will find her out taking Prairie Sunset photos and in the summer digging in her perennial and vegetable garden.

***We welcome all visitors worshipping with us today.***

*If you spend time in Door County please consider becoming a member of our special ministry. Contact any member for information.*

**All baptized Christians who celebrate the Real Presence in the Sacrament of Communion are invited to the Lord's Table.**

**Restrooms are located in the Pioneer School**

**Visit us at [BethanyEphraim.org](http://BethanyEphraim.org),  
and follow our worship service live, and archived,  
on the web site.**

## Prayers of Intercession

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

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Guide your church, O God, to sow seeds of forgiveness and righteousness on good soil. Direct your people to proclaim your love in this congregation and throughout the world. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Sustain your creation, O God, by sending favorable weather, causing trees and fields to grow, protecting waterways from pollution, and instilling in all people the need to be good stewards. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Maintain peace among all people, O God, and raise up lawyers to work for justice in the courts, advocates to speak for the downtrodden, and politicians to work on behalf of the common good. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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**Monday** (commemoration of Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, died 1566) Psalm 92.  
**Tuesday** Ephesians 4:17—5:2. **Wednesday** Proverbs 11:23-30. **Thursday** Psalm 86:11-17. **Friday** Hebrews 6:13-20. **Saturday** (Mary Magdalene, Apostle) John 20:1-2, 11-18. **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the church, died 1373) Isaiah 44:6-8; Psalm 86:11-17; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.

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# Celebrate

Sunday, July 16, 2023  
7th Sunday after Pentecost

*God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.*

## Prayer of the Day

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Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

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Isaiah 55:10-13

*God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.*

For as the rain and the snow come  
down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they  
have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread  
to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup>so shall my word be that goes out  
from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which  
I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which  
I sent it.

<sup>12</sup>For you shall go out in joy,  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall  
clap their hands.  
<sup>13</sup>Instead of the thorn shall come up  
the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up  
the myrtle;  
and it shall be to the LORD for a  
memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not  
be cut off.

Your paths o - ver - flow with plen - ty, O God, your  
paths o - ver - flow with plen - ty.

[You are to be praised, O <sup>1</sup> God, in Zion;  
to you shall vows <sup>1</sup> be fulfilled.

<sup>2</sup>**To you, the one who <sup>1</sup> answers prayer,  
to you all <sup>1</sup> flesh shall come.**

<sup>3</sup>Our sins are strong- <sup>1</sup> er than we are,  
but you blot out <sup>1</sup> our transgressions.

<sup>4</sup>**Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your <sup>1</sup> courts to dwell there!  
They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house,  
by the holiness <sup>1</sup> of your temple. R**

<sup>5</sup>Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of <sup>1</sup> our salvation,  
O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans <sup>1</sup> far away.

<sup>6</sup>**You make firm the mountains <sup>1</sup> by your power;  
you are girded a- <sup>1</sup> bout with might.**

<sup>7</sup>You still the roaring <sup>1</sup> of the seas,  
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor <sup>1</sup> of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup>**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your <sup>1</sup> marvelous signs;  
you make the dawn and the dusk to <sup>1</sup> sing for joy.] R**

<sup>9</sup>You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous;  
the river of God is <sup>1</sup> full of water.

You prepare the grain, for so you provide <sup>1</sup> for the earth.

<sup>10</sup>**You drench the furrows and smooth <sup>1</sup> out the ridges;  
with heavy rain you soften the ground and <sup>1</sup> bless its increase.**

<sup>11</sup>You crown the year <sup>1</sup> with your goodness,  
and your paths over- <sup>1</sup> flow with plenty.

<sup>12</sup>**May the fields of the wilderness be <sup>1</sup> rich for grazing,  
and the hills be <sup>1</sup> clothed with joy.**

<sup>13</sup>May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,  
and the valleys cloak them- <sup>1</sup> selves with grain;  
let them shout for <sup>1</sup> joy and sing. R

*There is no condemnation for those who live in Christ. God sent Christ to accomplish what the law was unable to do: condemn sin and free us from its death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.*

There is therefore now no condem-  
nation for those who are in Christ Jesus.  
<sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ  
Jesus has set you free from the law of sin  
and of death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what  
the law, weakened by the flesh, could  
not do: by sending his own Son in the  
likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with  
sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>so  
that the just requirement of the law  
might be fulfilled in us, who walk not  
according to the flesh but according to  
the Spirit. <sup>5</sup>For those who live accord-  
ing to the flesh set their minds on the  
things of the flesh, but those who live  
according to the Spirit set their minds  
on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>To set the  
mind on the flesh is death, but to set

the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.  
<sup>7</sup>For this reason the mind that is set on  
the flesh is hostile to God; it does not  
submit to God's law—indeed it cannot,  
<sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh cannot  
please God.

<sup>9</sup>But you are not in the flesh; you are  
in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God  
dwells in you. Anyone who does not have  
the Spirit of Christ does not belong to  
him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, though the  
body is dead because of sin, the Spirit  
is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>If the  
Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the  
dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ  
from the dead will give life to your mor-  
tal bodies also through his Spirit that  
dwells in you.

## Gospel

## Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*In Matthew's gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.*

That same day Jesus went out of the  
house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>Such  
great crowds gathered around him that  
he got into a boat and sat there, while  
the whole crowd stood on the beach.  
<sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in par-  
ables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out  
to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds  
fell on the path, and the birds came and  
ate them up. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>But when  
the sun rose, they were scorched; and  
since they had no root, they withered  
away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns,  
and the thorns grew up and choked  
them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and  
brought forth grain, some a hundred-  
fold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let any-  
one with ears listen!"

<sup>18</sup>"Hear then the parable of the  
sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word  
of the kingdom and does not under-  
stand it, the evil one comes and snatch-  
es away what is sown in the heart; this  
is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for  
what was sown on rocky ground, this  
is the one who hears the word and im-  
mediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such  
a person has no root, but endures only  
for a while, and when trouble or perse-  
cution arises on account of the word,  
that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As  
for what was sown among thorns, this  
is the one who hears the word, but the  
cares of the world and the lure of wealth  
choke the word, and it yields nothing.  
<sup>23</sup>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."