Welcome to long-time Lutherans, Christians from every tradition, and people new to this faith. Welcome to friends new and old. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; every socioeconomic and marital status, political conviction, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners, and questioning believers. Welcome.

Ebenezer Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. You are welcome here.

This worship booklet is digital! Zoom in for larger print.

Please use phones and other devices frequently, to offer and receive encouragement.

Remember to wash your hands and clean surfaces frequently.

Postures are a way in which we engage the body in worship. These movements (sitting, standing, making the sign of the cross) are optional; but can still be practiced at home!

Children are always welcome in worship at Ebenezer. If there are children in your house, invite them to worship with you.

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.
Gathering

Consider lighting a candle, or putting a cross in your field of vision.
Throughout the liturgy, you may sit, stand, or kneel as you wish.

*Flowers are given this day by Ann Ownby Hicks and Mark Hicks in memory of Martha Jean Ownby.*

Words of Welcome

Prelude  
*Forest Flower*  by Charles Lloyd

Gathering Hymn  
*Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*  
*Sing twice.*

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*And also with you.*
Prayer of the Day

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.

Word

The First Reading Isaiah 55:10-13

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, 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.

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. 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.
Psalm 65

To Bless the Earth

1. To bless the earth God sends us from

2. The seed by God provided is

3. God crowns the year with goodness; the

4. With grain the fields are covered; the

heaven’s abundant store

sown o’er hill and plain,

earth God’s mercy fills;

flocks in pastures graze;

and then come gentle

and then come gentle

the wilderness is

all nature joins in

springtime, enriching it once more.

showers to bless the springing grain.

fruitful, and joyful are the hills.

singing a joyful song of praise.

These four stanzas present a paraphrase of Psalm 65:9–13, a celebration of God’s providential care, which in turn draws forth a song of praise from all creation. This text is set to an early 17th-century tune composed for an affirmative chorale text often used at funerals.

TEXT: The New Metrical Version of the Psalms, 1909, alt.
MUSIC: Melchior Vulpius, 1609

CHRISTUS, DER IST MEIN LEBEN

7.6.7.6
The Second Reading Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 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, 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. For those who live according 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. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 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, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

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. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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 mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Scene from Labors of the Month, August. 15th century Swiss manuscript illumination.
That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 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. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. 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. 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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Parable of the Sower. Jesus mafa, Cameroon.

Silence for reflection follows.
Hymn of the Day

As Rain from the Clouds

1 As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,
2 As grain that is scattered your word has been sown
3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world,

as snow from the heavens refreshing the land.
on rocks and on road-ways, in good earth and sand.
a-waking and warming and healing our land.

Then soften our soil that the good seed may grow
Make fertile our soil that the good seed may grow
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow

and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.

We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;
We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;
We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;

we thank you, good gard’ner, for your tender toil.
we thank you, good gard’ner, for your tender toil.
we thank you, good gard’ner, for your tender toil.

We bless you, best farmer, for hundred-fold yield,
We bless you, best farmer, for hundred-fold yield,
We bless you, best farmer, for hundred-fold yield,

for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.

Text: Delores Dufner, 1934
Music: JONATHAN E. SPILMAN, 1812-1896
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Affirmation of Faith

Though not an historic creed, newer affirmation of faith can help us declare our faith in new ways. This affirmation comes from the community of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.

We believe in God the Creator,
by whom every person in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God:
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Amen.

Children’s Message

Prayer

Prayers of Intercession

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

Gracious God, your word has been sown in many ways and places. We pray for missionaries and newly planted congregations around the world. Inspire us by their witness to the faith we share. God, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Creating God, the mountains and hills burst into song and the trees and fields clap their hands in praise. We pray for the birds and animals who make their home in the trees, and for lands stripped bare by deforestation. Empower us to sustainably use what you have given. God, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.
Reigning God, we pray for our nation’s leaders. Increase their desire for justice and equality. We pray for our enemies. Bridge the chasms that divide us and guide authorities to a deep and lasting peace. God, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, care for all who are in need (*especially*). For those who are doubting, renew faith. For those who are worrying, provide release. For those who are struggling, ease burdens. For those in fear, give hope. God, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Renewing God, revive your church in this place. Nourish and nurture the seeds you have planted, that we might grow as disciples. Replace what has been depleted. Sustain our ministries (*especially*) and deepen relationships with the wider community. God, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Eternal God, we give thanks for all who have died (*especially Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, whom we commemorate today*). Comfort us in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. God, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Harvesters.* Pieter Bruegel.
Lord's Prayer
You may pray this prayer in these words; or, in language close to your heart.

Our Father in heaven,
  hallowed be your name,
  your kingdom come,
  your will be done,
  on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
  as we forgive those
  who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
  and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
  and the glory are yours,
  now and forever. Amen.

Peace
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The Ebenezer Choir
How Great Thou Art
Text by Carl G. Boberg; arr. by John Elmquist

O Lord my God,
  when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
  thy pow’r throughout the universe
displayed;

When through the woods
  and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
  when I look down
from lofty mountain grandeur
  and hear the brook
and feel the gentle breeze;

Refrain:
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
  how great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
  how great thou art! How great thou art!

  When Christ shall come,
  with shout of acclamation,
  and take me home,
  what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
  and there proclaim,
  “My God, how great thou art!”
If you are in Chicago, Ebenezer now offers Holy Communion for outdoor, socially distanced pick up on **Sundays any time from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

Delivery by a communion minister may also be available. 
Visit ebenezerchurch.org for more information.

## Sending

### Benediction

May God bless us and keep us. May God’s face shine on us with grace and mercy. May God look upon us with favor, ☩ and give us peace. **Amen.**

### Sending Hymn

**The Word of God Is Source and Seed**

1 The Word of God is source and seed; it comes to die and sprout and grow. 
2 The Word of God is breath and life; it comes to heal and wake and save. 
3 The Word of God is flesh and grace, who comes to sing, to laugh and cry.

So make your dark earth well-come warm; root deep the grain God bent to sow. 
So let the Spirit touch and mend and rouse your dry bones from their grave. 
So dare to be as Jesus was, who came to live and love and die.

**Refrain**

Gau-de-a-mus Do-mi-no, gau-de-a-mus Do-mi-no, 
In the Lord let us re-joice, in the Lord let us re-joice, 

gau-de-a-mus Do-mi-no! 
in the Lord let us re-joice!

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Text: Delores Dufner, o.s.b., 1939
Music: GAUDEAMUS DOMINO, David Hurd, b. 1950
Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Farmer's Market by Art Farmer