OF THE LAND AND SEASONS
Service of the Word
Lower Susquehanna Synod
Spring 2021
Of the Land and Seasons

“Of the Land and Seasons” is a setting of Holy Communion intended for quarterly use. It celebrates the cycle of agricultural seasons, and uses the activities of each season on farm, orchard, and ranch as images of God’s action and our response. The music collected and composed for this service is drawn from the traditions of Northern Appalachian folksongs, with their roots in the songs of African-Americans and the British Isles.

For spring, the themes include the preparation of the soil, waiting in hope, the struggle of new birth, planting, germination, and pollination. These images appear not only in the readings chosen for this season, but also in the confessional prayer and the Thanksgiving for the Word.

While the service, published by Augsburg Fortress, is a setting of Holy Communion, this service has been arranged to be used as a Service of the Word during the time of distancing necessitated by the pandemic.

The liturgical texts are based on those of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, and written by Stephen P. Folkemer who, with Beth Bergeron Folkemer, also collected and arranged the music. The texts for the hymn paraphrases which serve as liturgical music were written by Beth Bergeron Folkemer and Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr. The Thanksgiving for the Word was written by Mark Oldenburg.
OF THE LAND AND SEASONS
Service of the Word for Spring

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC
Music from Of the Land and Seasons

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection

Most merciful God,
We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.
We have denied our need for daily new birth.
We have scorned the means you provide
to fertilize and cultivate our growth in grace.
We have closed ourselves to pollination by others of your redeeming,
particularly those whose fruits differ from ours.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.
Forgive us, revive us, and open us to your gifts,
so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.
God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead to sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG       We Praise You For the Life that Stirs

1 We praise you for the life that stirs when spring-time warms the
lengthened earth; but most, we praise the

2 We praise you for the summer sun, for rip’n’ing grain and
spring-time seed; up-on our hearts your

3 We sing your praise for autumn’s glow, for harvest yield from
silence lies, for promise of re-

4 We sing your praise through winter’s night, when earth in frozen
with the throng of saints and angels,

5 We praise the Father, praise the Son, and praise the Spirit,

grace that lures our slum-b’ring souls to love and mirth,
for the Son whose light brings healing in his rays,
grace bestow till faith bears fruit in loving deed,
turning light, for life in Christ that never dies,
joined as one in grateful, ever-lasting song,

our slum-b’ring souls to love and mirth.
whose light brings healing in his rays.
till faith bears fruit in loving deed.
for life in Christ that never dies.
in grateful, ever-lasting song.

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.

-2-
KYRIE

Cantor

We pray for peace, O Lord, make plow-shares of our swords, make

Assembly

plow-shares of our swords: hear us when we cry to you.

Lord, have mercy on us, have mercy on us, Lord, have

mercy on us: hear us when we cry to you.

Cantor

Christ, make us grow in grace until we see your face, un-

Assembly

til we see your face: hear us when we cry to you.

Christ, have mercy on us, have mercy on us, Christ, have

mercy on us: hear us when we cry to you.

-3-
Cantor

Defend your church, O Lord, and root it in your word, and

root it in your word: hear us when we cry to you.

Assembly

Lord, have mercy on us, have mercy on us, Lord, have

mercy on us: hear our cry. Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Cantor

1. Above the hills the angel hosts
2. In heav'n, on earth reigns God Most High,
3. Sing justice, mercy, joy and peace,
4. We worship you, our thanks we bring,
5. To Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord,

All

Sing glory! Glory! Glory! God's Love is come to
Yet tenderly God's own good will grants
We bow before you
The Lamb of God, Eternal Word,

All

seek the lost. Give Glory to God in the Highest!
PRAYER OF THE DAY
O God, you give birth to all creation. By the power of your Holy Spirit, cause your word to bring forth new life in us, awaken our slumbering hearts, and enliven us with a patient and expectant hope; that we may break forth in blossom and stalk, full of the promise of fruit and grain; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 2:4b-9

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:18-25

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.
When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: “A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold.” As he said this, he called out, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that ‘looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.’ “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their

**Gospel**

Luke 8:4-15

The holy gospel according to Luke, the eighth chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

"Glory to you, O Lord."
hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance. (NRSV)

The gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

We Plow the Fields and Scatter

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1. We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but
2. You only are the maker of all things near and far. You
3. We thank you, our creator, for all things bright and good, the

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1. Aramos nuestros campos, y luego el sembrador
2. Elijos la simiente esparce con amor. Mas
3. Es de Dios la mano que hace germinar, ca-

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lor y lluvia dando a todos por igual.

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breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.
more to us, your children, you give our daily bread.
what you most would treasure—our humble, thankful hearts.
CREED
I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God’s creation.

…Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

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

*The people may exchange a sign of Christ’s peace with those with whom they are physically gathered.*
THANKSGIVING

Offering

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you bless us with gifts of guidance, new life, growth in grace, and fruitful labor. Accept the first fruits of time and toil, field and orchard we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Canticle of Thanksgiving  Oh, Sing of God’s Great Victory!

Verses (sung by leader)

1. O sing of God’s great victory! Jesus’ blood has set us free!
2. O is it not a mystery That our Lord a Lamb should be,
3. All honor, blessing, glory, might Sing the hosts to Christ on high,

Let all his creatures join our songs, For to Christ the throne belongs
Who on the cruel cross was slain, But arose in heaven to reign.
All power, riches, wisdom strength. Now let all on earth reply:

Refrain (sung by all)

Sing we alleluia, praises to the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Thanksgiving for the Word

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God. At the creation you planted a garden and set humanity to care for it. By your Word you brought light and life into existence, by your Word you gave sustenance to all creatures, and by your Word you called us as stewards and caretakers of the land. Still today you bring new growth and plenty, and call us to the duty and delight of protecting and nourishing your good earth. For your Word of life, O God, we give you thanks and praise.
Praise and thanks to you, holy God. You planted in your creation the seed of hope, that the world would not continue forever in its bondage to decay. By your Word, through your prophets and singers, you watered that seed in Israel and declared to the nations that we would be redeemed. Still today you offer your Word of promise, that justice and peace will be brought to birth. For your Word of life, O God, 
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Praise and thanks to you, holy God. In the fullness of your time you sent your Word, your Son. We remember his prodigal planting of your Word by his teaching, his abundant giving of your food and health by his miracles, his gracious offering of your forgiveness by his welcome. We proclaim the passage of his final Passover, when for our sake he passed through death into life and sealed with the Spirit our own place as his companions. For your Word of life, O God, 
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit, holy God, upon us and your whole creation. Let the seed of your Word find good soil, so that we may hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance. Unite our lives and our gifts with all of your children; move us to respond with eagerness to your Word of invitation to join in your service of this suffering and beloved world; through him who is the sower and the seed, the Tree of Life and the Bread of Heaven, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**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.**
Blessing

The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The God of all grace bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song

*Let All Things Now Living*

1. Let all things now living a song of thanks-giving to
2. God rules all the forces: the stars in their courses and

God the creator triumphant ly raise,
sun in its orbit obediently shine;

who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us, who
the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains, the

still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the ocean proclaim God divine.

God’s banners are o’er us, God’s light goes be-

We too should be voicing our love and re-

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE from Of the Land and Seasons

God's banners are o'er us, God's light goes before us, a pillar of fire shining forth in the night, joying; with glad adoration a song let us raise till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished, as till all things now living unite in thanksgiving: "To forward we travel from light into light. God in the highest, hosanna and praise!"
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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“Let All Things Now Living”
  Text: Katherine K. Davis © 1939, 1966 E. G. Schirmer Music Company. All rights reserved. Used by permission under OneLicense.net #
  Tune: THE ASH GROVE, Welsh folk tune

“We Plow the Fields and Scatter/ Aramos nuestros campos”
  Text: Matthias Claudius; English tr. Jane M. Campbell; Spanish tr. Ernesto Barocio
  Tune: SAN FERNANDO, Luis Olivieri © Abingdon Press, admin The Copyright Company. All rights reserved. Used by permission under OneLicense.net #A-716039.

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“We Praise You For the Life that Stirs”
  Text: Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr.
  Tune: THE GLORIOUS HILL, Stephen P. Folkemer

“We Pray For Peace, O Lord”
  Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, based on the Kyrie
  Tune: MY LORD, HOW LONG, African-American Spiritual

“Above the Hills”
  Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, based on the Gloria
  Tune: THE DEVIL’S NINE QUESTIONS, Appalachian traditional

“O God, Whose Word Well Planted”
  Text: Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr.
  Tune: ABIDING PRESENCE, Stephen P. Folkemer

“O Sing of God’s Great Victory”
  Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, based on Revelation 5
  Tune: THE SHEPHERD’S DAUGHTER AND THE KING, Appalachian traditional