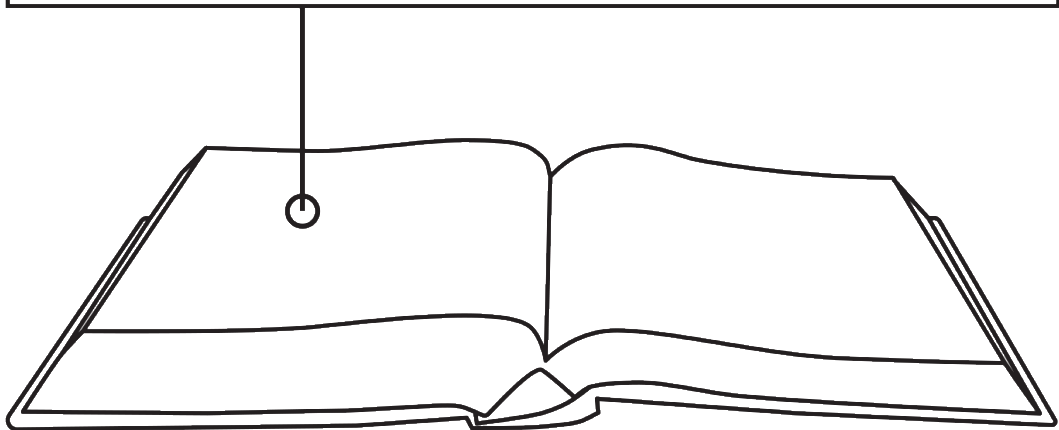


# Define: Christian



**THE CHRISTIAN IS PLANTED BY THE WORD**

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

# **BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** | York, Nebraska

*July 16, 2023*

## **SERIES THEME: DEFINE CHRISTIAN**

Ask ten different people to define Christian and you may get ten different answers. One might say, "A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus." Okay. But the demons believe that Jesus exists and is the Son of God. So is that definition adequate? Another person might have a more negative view. He says, "A Christian is someone who believes he is better than others." Is that completely false? And if you aren't humble, does that mean you aren't Christian? In our next worship series Christ himself defines the term Christian and describes what Christians do. We will be struck by how often we do not do all those things. There likely are times when people could look at our behavior and assume we were unbelievers. Yet throughout this series Jesus will demonstrate that ultimately a Christian is one who runs to Christ for forgiveness precisely because he has failed to live like what he is—a Christian. As we receive the mercy of Christ, it moves us to strive with all our being to better fit Christ's beautiful definition, doing all the things Jesus says that Christians do.

## **THEME OF THE DAY: THE CHRISTIAN IS PLANTED BY THE WORD**

Planting seed by hand can seem magical. In your hand the seed looks insignificant and lifeless. Yet you put the seed into the soil, and the natural process of life begins. All by itself, the seed germinates and sprouts and reaches to the sun. Except when it doesn't! Plant multiple seeds and often only some, perhaps just a small amount, will sprout. As these few sprouts grow, birds and pests and weeds and weather attack. The reality is that once the seed leaves your hand, you are at the mercy of forces beyond your control. Today, God uses that experience from nature to explain the supernatural process by which God calls humans to faith through the gospel. The Christian is planted by the Word. The Christian can plant the seed of the gospel into the soil of another's heart. What happens after that is completely beyond our control. Yet God promises us that his Word always accomplishes his good purposes. God's Word is powerful, all on its own, without our help.

**Worship Leader**  
**Organist/Pianist**

Pastor Justin Wilkens  
Quinton Corwin

## **Acknowledgments**

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## The Service, Setting Two (page 172 in Christian Worship 21)

### Hymn: 981 In this Place Your Word is Planted



1 In this place your Word is plant - ed; on our  
2 Let your plant - ing not be wast - ed, wilt - ed  
3 Help us trea - sure ho - ly wis - dom, sa - vor  
4 Blest are they who, truth re - ceiv - ing, know its



path the seed is sown. To the Church your  
soon in ston - y field. Let our world - ly  
ev - 'ry word you give. Help us cher - ish  
val - ue more than gold. Blest are they who,



Word is spo - ken; in our hearts a light has shone.  
cares not choke it, rob - bing you of right - ful yield.  
Je - sus' gos - pel, bread by which your peo - ple live.  
per - se - ver - ing, bear good fruit a hun - dred - fold.

Text: Delores Dufner, b. 1939

Tune: Christian F. Witt, 1660–1716

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*Stand*

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### Confession

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins**

**with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**Lord, Have Mercy**

*CW 174*

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

# Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



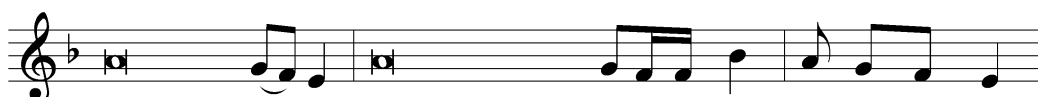
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



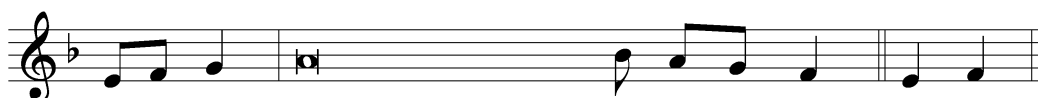
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## **THE WORD**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## **Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, since you have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Be seated*

## **First Reading**

*Isaiah 55:6–11*

*God's Word always works- it is a seed that produces the fruit God earnestly desires.*

<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord while he may be found!

Call on him while he is near!

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked man abandon his way.

Let an evil man abandon his thoughts.

Let him turn to the Lord,

and he will show him mercy.

Let him turn to our God,

because he will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup> Certainly my plans are not your plans,

and your ways are not my ways, declares the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so my ways are higher than your ways,

and my plans are higher than your plans.

<sup>10</sup> Just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky

and do not return there

unless they first water the earth, make it give birth, and cause it to sprout,

so that it gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

<sup>11</sup> in the same way my word that goes out from my mouth

will not return to me empty.

Rather, it will accomplish whatever I please,  
and it will succeed in the purpose for which I sent it.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm of the Day: 65- Front of Hymnal: The Seed That Falls**

### **Second Reading**

*1 Corinthians 3:5–11*

*We sow the seed of God's Word, but only God can make that seed grow.*

<sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are ministers through whom you believed, and each served as the Lord gave him his role. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup> So then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but it is God who causes the growth. <sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters are united, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup> For God is the one whom we serve as coworkers, and you are God's field, God's building.

<sup>10</sup> In keeping with the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. But let each person be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> In fact, no one can lay any other foundation than the one that has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

### **Gospel Acclamation**

*Isaiah 55:11*

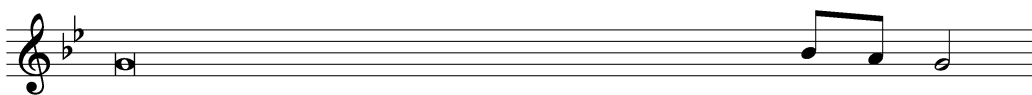


*Refrain*



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Tone*



My word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I de - sire



and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

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## Gospel

*Matthew 13:1–9,18–23*

*Jesus pictures ministry as a sower scattering seed to all with no regard for where it might land.*

### The Parable of the Sower

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus left the house and was sitting by the sea. <sup>2</sup> A large crowd gathered around him. So he stepped into a boat and sat down, while all the people stood on the shore. <sup>3</sup> He told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. Immediately the seed sprang up, because the soil was not deep. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, the seed was scorched. Because it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked it. <sup>8</sup> But some seed fell on good ground and produced grain: some one hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty times more than was sown. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear." <sup>18</sup> "So listen carefully to the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the Evil One comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the seed that was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> The seed that was sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he is not deeply rooted and does not endure. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup> The seed that was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worry of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it produces no fruit. <sup>23</sup> But the seed that was sown on the good ground is the one who continues to hear and understand the word. Indeed he continues to produce fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times more than was sown."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*Be seated*



## Hymn of the Day: 644 Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast

### Sermon

*Stand*

### Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

*Be seated*

### Prayer of the Church

Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ.  
Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.

**Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.**

Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.

**Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.**

Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.

**Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.**

Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.

**Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.**

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

**Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.**

Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. [Pour out your special blessing on . . . *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.

**Lift the eyes of the distressed to your love in Christ.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## **Offering**

**Offering Hymn: 712 Delay Not! Delay Not**

*sts. 1–2*

## **Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.  
**Amen.**

## **Hymn: 640 God's Word Is Our Great Heritage**

## **NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Today:** 10:30 AM Worship

**Sunday:** 10:30 AM Worship

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