**WORSHIP for day after Independence Day – July 5, 2020**

1. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
2. 1) Please invite family or friends, who want to join us for live worship on Sundays @10:45am,
3. to request access by emailing their name, email, & phone number to the church office.
4. 2) Please have your Bible at hand for Worship each week!
5. 3) To watch sermons recorded on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website:
6. <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP
7. or follow us on our Facebook from the homepage.
8. 4) Youth group for those entering 5th thru 12th grade at 3pm on 2nd & 4th Sundays: 7/12.
9. 5) Junior Church & Good News Club (by FPCP) by Zoom for 2nd thru 5th graders 3:30-4:30pm

5 Wednesdays from 7/8-8/5. To register contact lead Teacher, Linda Glenn by email lindajfglenn@gmail.com. Teachers from FPCP junior church are Melissa Holland & Sally Kean.

1. 6) If you need a COVID-19 cloth mask call 740-901-1232 for the Johnsons, who lead the CRT.
2. Thank you to Gage Marcum and Katie Slaymaker, who have been making masks available.
3. 7) The regular FPCP session meeting is 6:30pm (2nd) Thursday, July 9th, on Zoom.
4. ***Prelude played by Brent Miller:* “Picture This”**
5. *Streaming CCLI 20373701; ©****Copyright****1996 by Brickman & Swimmer. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*
6. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EogrjEYM2i2YuXKKcRgzQlU_BkPYJkrj>
7. **Call to Worship:** Romans 8:3-4 *Unison*

**We worship Jesus Christ, Savior and Lord, King over all of heaven and earth.
“For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”**

1. **Opening Hymn: “O Beautiful for Spacious Skies”**
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmP9LvHgcaA>
3. **Prayer of Confession**: Romans 8:5-8 *Unison*
4. **“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but**
5. **those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.**
6. **The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.**
7. **The mind governed by the flesh hostile to God: it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do**
8. **so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.” Forgive the sins of our flesh.”**
9. **Amen** *(Pause for a time of silent confession.)*
10. **Assurance of Forgiveness:** Romans 8:1-2 *Responsively*
11. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through
12. Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”
13. We believe the good news of the gospel.
14. **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

**“The Gloria Patri**”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgcYD_m4OhU>

1. **Hymn of Preparation: “I Come to the Garden Alone”**
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ2Mcd7pX20>
3. **Call to God’s Word**: *Unison*
4. **“Scripture cannot be set aside… What does Scripture say?”** John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.
5. **Prayer for Illumination:** *Unison*
6. **Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to bring**
7. **you glory and praise. Amen.**
8. **Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:1-23** (NIV)
9. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+13%3A1-23&version=NIV>
10. **SERMON: “Sowing of the Kingdom”** *by The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford*
11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Foy11Rb6hf4&list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd&index=2&t=0s>

SERMON: ”Sowing of the Kingdom.” A crucial task for people of the kingdom to live. At the start God planted a garden for Adam & Eve to tend, in order to stay alive. Agriculture is not just a way of life, but necessary for life. Cultured grain and grapes then become bread & juice, life sustaining elements on the table.
 Sowing, too, has been a part of kingdom conquest. Consider the Greco-Roman empires. Though much gold was in the hills and mountains of Greece, there was not enough land to provide food to the population. So fleets of ships came by sea to capture land. To this the Romans added great road systems, as routes between lands, where crops, like precious herbs and spices, could be traded. Like with Greece, England set sail to colonialize an expansive continent across the Atlantic, which included great plantations to provide food and a livelihood to landowners. Going to the historical sites of colonial America, places like Jamestown and Williamsburg, VA, one can experience early American farm life. I have visited them more than once.
 Farming also brought great wealth to the king of England thru taxation, which eventually led to our independent nation, with its anniversary celebrated yesterday. I’ve been to our nation’s first capital in Philadelphia, PA. PA means “Penn’s woods,” established by William Penn, a Quaker, who came to the colonies also for religious freedom. Penn was a meticulous planner, establishing a city gridwork, which became an American standard. Public garden squares are throughout the city, and every home included enough land for a garden and orchard.

As you know, I grew up in Pennsylvania, even lived in a neighborhood called Penn’s Woods, near where my mother still lives! Most places that I lived used to be rural farmland turned suburb. You know about this. My family homestead was one such area, & my grandparent’s property, always included a vegetable garden. The garden bed was a perfect rectangle cut out of the backyard. I don’t need to describe it to Midwesterners in the bread basket of America, with amber waves of grain & fruited plains! We can all picture our own family gardens and farmlands. We can see the ordered rows of vegetables with enough room in between for growth and harvesting. Perhaps we have even laid out garden beds. A level space is carefully chosen with enough sunlight and adequate drainage. Rocks, debris, & weeds are cleared out. Soil is tested & prepared.
 These principles are applied for garden beds here in the US and throughout the world, including the Holy Land, where Jesus offered up this parable to the crowds gathered along the Sea of Galilee. In Israel, a country about the size of New Jersey, there is limited arable land. Although the climate of the Mediterranean chaparral is friendly for crops, the wildernesses of deserts and mountains there are not. Therefore, no parcel of arable land goes to waste. For example, though we picture the garden tomb as bursting with beautiful decorative flowers, the tomb is site of a winepress, indicating that the garden was likely a cultivated vineyard. I saw this along with fields of winter wheat & crops along the Galilee.

 So how does this foreknowledge of climate & agriculture in Israel reconcile with Jesus’ story of a farmer? To understand, first consider the nature of parables. A parable is a story that is paired side by side with another story. When Jesus’ newly told story is held side by side with the well known story of farming, the sowing of the kingdom is turned on its head. In fact, starting from chapter 13 in Matthew, with parables Jesus’ method of preaching & teaching is turned upside down. Thus far, his pattern of ministry has been preaching and teaching, followed by healing & calling. Starting in ch.13, midway thru Jesus’ earthly ministry, the pattern takes a turns. Healings become more sparse. Jesus refuses to heal at the demand of religious leaders for “a sign.” Furthermore, Jesus begins to preach and teach in a less straight forward manner. Instead, he begins to teach in side by side stories, in parables about the kingdom of heaven, trying to turn the thinking of religious leaders around.
 How does this happen in the parable which Jesus explains is about sowing the message of the kingdom? First of all, a farmer violates every rule of sensible planting, in not testing and preparing the soil in the garden bed. He haphazardly throws good seed away, sowing onto rocky and thorny ground and even along trafficked paths. Thereby, whoever this farmer is wastes ¾ of his seed. Outrageous. What skilled gardener would do such a thing? Whoever has ever heard such a bizarre tale?

There is such a legend, even here in the US. Johnny Appleseed was said to sow apple seeds throughout PA and into Indiana, including his passing thru Ohio. Drawings circulate of him randomly sowing seeds everywhere he went. But Johnny Chapman was a pioneer and missionary who, like William Penn, carefully laid out his gardening plans. But even though Johnny’s carefree method of planting is a myth, Jesus’ parable should not be disregarded. Just as the real Johnny has been identified, thru Jesus’ explanation and understanding of Hebrew literary conventions we can discern the identity of “a farmer.”
 In Hebrew oral accounts, when the listener hears the phrase of “a certain someone,” the implication is that the listener already knows who “a certain someone” is. The identity goes without saying. Often, the oral tradition of the Torah brought listeners to start thinking back to “the beginning,” that is to the first garden, mentioned at the start of this sermon and at the start of Scripture. “A farmer” is The Farmer, The Creator God!
 Jesus explains that what a certain farmer sows is the message of the kingdom that Jesus’ always preaches about. The parable is a topsy turvy metaphor. Actual seed is not sown, but the message of the kingdom is sown. And while the religious leaders may interpret the sowing as being disorderly and haphazard, with seed wasted among untested and prepared soil, rocky, thorny, and trodden, the parable demonstrates the abundant generosity of the Creator, who does not leave any ground uncovered.

Not only does the farmer sow, but disciples of Christ are also to sow seed of the kingdom. Remember in ch. 10, the 12 were sent ahead of Jesus into towns and remote areas along the upper Galilee where they and Jesus teach, heal, and call people to the receive the seed, the Good news, the message of the kingdom of heaven. Seed was scattered among the garden beds of the crowds, whether soil was prepared or not. As a result, ¾ of the seed bore no fruit, since much seed was snatched away, burnt up, or choked.
 Only God knows what will happen to the seed sowed. Only God knows the condition of the soil, the condition of the hearts of the crowds and of religious leaders. A large number of these hearts were not prepared. The soil was not adequate for the seed to survive. But the message of the kingdom, the seed was received in good, arable soil.
 What does this parable mean for us? As usual, Jesus proclaims the Gospel, spreading the Good News of the Kingdom. He instructs to us to do the same, echoed thru the NT. Jesus’ last words were the great commission & his command for us to be witnesses. So why are most mainline churches declining? Because we have forgotten our call. Because we worry that the message will not be accepted. In this parable, Jesus reveals that our doubts are real. At best, only ¼ of our sowing will bear fruit. But our job is to sow, whether or not the seed catches hold. Imagine if those who bore fruit multi-fold, people like Martin Luther and Billy Graham, never heard the message. Faith comes by hearing. Who will hear from us? Freely sow the Good News of the kingdom.

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**COMMUNION**

**Jesus Invites Us to Come to the Table**

1. **PRAYERS OF JOYS & CONCERNS, FOLLOWED BY THE LORD’s PRAYER:** *Unison*
2. **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**
3. **Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**
4. **Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;**
5. **and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**
6. **For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Word of Institution, Partaking of Communion, and Prayer after Communion**

**Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus**

**Prayer Of Dedication**: *Unison*

God, in view of your mercy help us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to you, O God. Amen. *Romans 12:1*

1. **Doxology**
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqpXWF15avU>

**Closing Hymn: “Trust and Obey”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KB4KcleYiWM>

**Benediction:**  *Responsively*

Go now to sow the Good News of the Kingdom in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Please join together again in worship next Sunday!*

*If able, please remain for a time of sharing during*

**Table Talk**

Have you ever hesitated

in sowing the kingdom with someone,

afraid that the person would not accept the message?