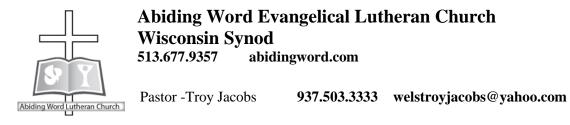


8470 Landen Drive Maineville, Ohio

At Abiding Word We gather around the Word (worship) We grow in the Word (education) And we share the Word with the world (outreach).



#### Welcome!

To all who have gathered here this morning we welcome you in the name of Christ our Lord. Through him we have access to God in boldness and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12) Please join us for coffee after the service. Also join us for Bible Study at 11:00.

## A TOP-DOWN FAITH

## FROM THE TINIEST SEED GROWS THE LARGEST KINGDOM

Usually, a kingdom advances and is secured through things like military might or political force or worldly wealth. It can be tempting to believe the same holds true in the kingdom of God. Perhaps we think churches would flourish if we had the right rulers passing and enforcing the right laws. Or we believe that for a church to do good requires a robust budget. Political force. Worldly wealth. This way of thinking is breathtakingly wrong.

We need God to give us the top-down faith that grasps the fact that kingdom of God advances in ways that are imperceptible. Through something that seems insignificant to most—the gospel—the King of kings establishes his reign in human hearts. Even Jesus himself taught that the gospel seems unimpressive, for he often compared the gospel to a tiny seed. Yet within a seed is hidden life. As the seed of the gospel is planted, the largest of all kingdoms grows.

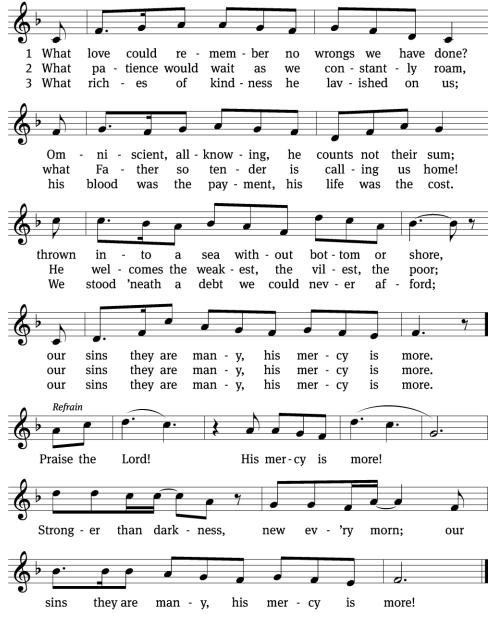
Stand

- M: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.
- C: And also with you.

# **CONFESSION OF SINS**

- M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.
- C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.
- M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.
- C: Amen.

#### 579 His Mercy Is More



The refrain for stanza 3 is sung three times (twice, with no break between, then a final time).

Text: Matt Papa, b. 1985; Matt Boswell, b. 1979 Tune: Matt Papa, b. 1985; Matt Boswell, b. 1979 Text and tune '2006 GetM Must: Scope, Messenger Hymns, and Love Your Enemies Publishing, admin. MusicServices.org. Used by permission: OneLkense no. 714908

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: 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 and bring forth fruits in faith, hope, and love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Be seated

## FIRST READING

## EZEKIEL 17:22–24

<sup>22</sup>" 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. <sup>23</sup>On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. <sup>24</sup>All the trees of the forest will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

" 'I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.' "

- M: The Word of the Lord.
- C: Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 1B HOW TRULY BLEST ARE THEY

## SECOND READING

## **COLOSSIANS 1:3-8**

**PSALTER PAGE 3** 

<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— <sup>5</sup>the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel <sup>6</sup>that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. <sup>7</sup>You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, <sup>8</sup>and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

#### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. Alleluia.

#### GOSPEL

#### MARK 4:26-34

<sup>26</sup>He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup>Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. <sup>28</sup>All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. <sup>29</sup>As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

<sup>30</sup>Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? <sup>31</sup>It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. <sup>32</sup>Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

<sup>33</sup>With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. <sup>34</sup>He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

M: This is the gospel of our Lord.



# HYMN: YOUR KINGDOM, O GOD, IS MY GLORIOUS TREASURE

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## SERMON

MARK 4:26-34

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.

Offering

#### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

#### 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.

Be seated

#### Stand

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



#### BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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.



Be seated

# HYMN: CHRIST ALONE THE WORLD'S REDEEMER

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