

Sunday 12 July 2026  
Morning Worship for  
The Sixth Sunday of Trinity  
Led by Michaela McNeill, ALM  
<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>



## Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

## Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it,  
the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.

**For he has founded it upon the seas  
and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep.**

'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,  
or who can rise up in his holy place?'

'Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,  
who have not lifted up their soul to an idol,  
nor sworn an oath to a lie;

**'They shall receive a blessing from the Lord,  
a just reward from the God of their salvation.'**

Such is the company of those who seek him,  
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

**Lift up your heads, O gates;  
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;  
and the King of glory shall come in.**

'Who is the King of glory?'

‘The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord who is mighty in battle.’

**Lift up your heads, O gates;  
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;  
and the King of glory shall come in.**

‘Who is this King of glory?’

‘The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory.’

### **Hymn – Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You**

- 1 Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace  
to let you be my servant, too.
- 2 We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.
- 3 I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.
- 4 I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.
- 5 When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6 Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace  
to let you be my servant, too.

Richard Gillard (born 1953)

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## Invitation to Confession

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit.  
Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness,  
all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

## Confession

**Lord God, we have sinned against you;  
we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Readings by Dorothy Morison

### 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.  
For the Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. 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.’  
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Reflection by Sue Nelms

Let us pray

Now, O Lord, take my lips and speak through them; take our minds and think through them; take our hearts and set them on fire with love for you. Amen.

This morning’s gospel reading forms part of a series of stories told by Jesus to explain his purpose on earth. Today’s narrative is the third of five groups of parables and focuses on a group of stories about plants, how they grow and how God works through them.

My Bible, and probably many more Bibles, names the story ‘The Parable of the Sower’. However, on the face of it, it seems to be more about the seed and how it and the soil interact with each other.

It is sometimes suggested that Jesus used stories about agriculture and fishing because those were things that the people of the day knew about and understood, but I really don’t know if that theory fits comfortably with this morning’s parable. Whilst I accept that they probably had an understanding of how things grew and what they were aiming for, I am not convinced that this morning’s farmer, ‘the Sower’ was, on the face of it, a very good example of a competent farmer. I may have got the wrong end of the stick here, but surely any self-respecting farmer wanting to get a good crop, spends time preparing the soil, feeding it, making sure that it is ready to give the seed the best possible chance of growing and producing a good yield. However this morning’s farmer seems to pick any old place and just goes for it, chucking his seed wherever he feels like! I can’t help feeling that if Jesus had told this story to a group of 1st Century farmers they would have wondered what on earth he was on about because hearing where the seed fell, I suspect that next morning most of them would have

expected to find an empty field, a lot of fat birds and very little chance of a good crop!

A competent farmer or gardener, is selective about where they sow their seed or plant their plants. Different plants like different soils and thrive best in certain places with certain conditions. The good plantsman (or woman) knows this and plants accordingly. The sower in our story, however, simply seems to chuck the seed liberally and freely, allowing it to land all over the place in different conditions and soils and leaving it free to flourish as best it can in those circumstances.

The way the story is told in Matthew's gospel paints a powerful image. We are very much into the teaching phase for the disciples. At the beginning of our narrative Jesus maintains his distance from the crowds, initially sitting beside the lake and then climbing into a boat (presumably with the disciples). He tells the whole crowd the story of the sower and his seeds but leaves them to puzzle about it and does not explain it to them. However, it obviously is a really puzzling story, because the disciples don't understand it and they want to, so they ask Jesus to explain it. Jesus then chooses to explain the parable to them only, the people 'to whom it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven'. It all gets much so clearer doesn't it?!

Looking at the seeds what do we learn about them in this story?

The first seeds fell on the path and the birds, not surprisingly, came and ate them up. Birds have a habit of doing that. The seed would probably never grow on the path – nothing is ready, there is no soil, no nutrients, nothing to use as a firm foundation and the ground is probably very disturbed by people walking etc. The seed is left exposed and open to the elements. The evil one, represented here by the birds, comes and snatches away this seed. It is never going to grow because it has nothing on which to build.

The next batch of seeds fall on the rocky ground where there was

some soil but not much. However, there was enough nutrient to enable seeds to start to germinate and grow, but not enough to do so strongly or to put down good roots that would help to nurture the plant by enabling it to absorb nutrients and moisture. When the sun came out the plants were scorched and withered away. Jesus compared them to people who hear God's word with joy but who perhaps don't realise that effort needs to come from them too and when things possibly get challenging or difficult fall away because they decide it asks too much of them. It is all too easy to accept the beauty of God's love, but then step away when we are asked to love back or share that love with others when all our strength is going into taking care of ourselves.

Some seeds fell among thorns and then the thorns grew up and choked them. Jesus described these people as those who again hear the word of God but whose potential is choked by the cares of the world and the attractions of wealth. It is so easy to be attracted to physical comforts and the pleasure of money. Who doesn't want a comfortable life after all? These are the thoughts that begin to suggest to us that Jesus is not enough and as a result we don't give his love the focus we should. We allow the world to take over our minds, hearts and desires, to choke our faith and to replace the strength and love of God with something much more material, something that might feel physically stronger for a while but, as we know, can be oh so fleeting.

Finally some seeds fell on good soil, soil that had been prepared, soil that was ready to nurture the seed as it grew and that soil led to the seed being so productive – to the tune of 30, 60 or 100 times what had been sown – an image that takes us right back to Isaac planting seeds in the book of Genesis that and then reaping crops 100 fold from his sowing. As Jesus explained, these are the people who hear the word of God and who understand it. They reflect on it, they live by it and in doing so become steadily stronger and stronger until they deliver the most amazing crop. These seeds grow into the people who accept God's love and freely share it with those around them, because they too may have the potential that comes from the good soil.

We have thought about the seed but now let's return to the sower. I am not a natural gardener – it requires far more attention than I can give it! However I understand that in order to be successfully productive, preparation and hard work is key. A good sower would, as I mentioned before, ensure that the soil is well prepared for growing the seeds sown in it. The right amount of nutrient and the right amount of watering in addition to good quality seed, still well in date all combine to achieve a successful crop.

By contrast the image of today's sower is much more random. He simply seems to sow where he is – not taking any notice of the path, rocky bits or thorn patches. He simply sows the seed wherever he can. That is possibly not what we might expect of a good farmer. But then, God does not conform to our images; he conforms to his own. That is the wonder of God. He sows his word freely wherever it is needed and wanted, not necessarily where we think is ready for it!. Not all of it will root strongly, especially in the rough bits, but some will. God will also continue to sow the seed of his love in order to give us the opportunity to put down our roots and grow in his love. That for me is one of the joys of God's love – he keeps offering us the opportunity.

And as we sit and ponder all of the hard work that goes into producing a good harvest, I also think about the satisfaction and joy of a successful one. When we first moved into our house my daughter and her friend found the old flower packets from the days when they came free on the front of magazines and they went wild, throwing the seed round our front garden space – no preparation or anything. What we ended up with was beautiful – wild and possibly unconventional but definitely beautiful – and I think today of God also getting so much joy and pleasure from the results of his work. It is too easy to think 'well that didn't work very well' if a crop is small but perhaps we need instead to rejoice in what progress is made. Amen

## The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator 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 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.

## Intercessions by Michaela McNeill

The response to the bidding Lord, receive our praise, is **and hear our prayer.**

We pray for God's grace.

Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer.**

Lord God, through your grace we are your people:

Through your son you have redeemed us;

In your Spirit you have made us your own.

We pray for the Church and for any new Christians who are joining us  
and that they will come to know you.

Make our hearts respond to your love.

Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer.**

We pray for our everchanging world, for the problems faced by society and for the local community of which the Lordsbridge Team is a part. Make our lives bear witness to your glory in the world.  
Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer.**

We pray for people in need and for our Christian service towards them and that they able to receive the care and support that they need. Make our wills eager to obey, and hands ready to heal.  
Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for everyone here today. Make our voices one with all your people In heaven and on earth.  
Lord receive our praise, **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of life, hear our prayer and make us one in heart and mind To serve you with joy forever. Amen.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Silence is kept

### Collect for the Sixth Sunday of Trinity

Merciful God,  
you have prepared for those who love you  
such good things as pass our understanding:  
pour into our hearts such love toward you  
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,  
may obtain your promises,  
which exceed all that we can desire;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us so we pray;

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours**

**now and forever. Amen.**

## **Hymn - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, thou art all compassion  
pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.

2 Come, almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy grace receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

3 Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation,  
perfectly restored in thee:  
Changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) (Public Domain)

## Notices

### Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make us strong in faith and love,  
defend us on every side,  
and guide us in truth and peace  
and the blessing of God almighty;  
Father Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us, and remain with us and all those whom we love,  
now and forever. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**