



The Session and members of First Presbyterian Church, Fargo extend a sincere welcome to you. We are grateful for your presence today! We welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and to serve as an officer of the church.

We recycle! If you are not taking your bulletin, please drop it in the blue bin at the door as you leave.

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

We Gather in Christ

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God, you are the gardener of all creation. You planted this world with the seeds of your love and grow them with your faithfulness. We are your harvest; we find our meaning and sustenance in you. May our minds listen to you calling, may our hearts be attuned to your will, may our feet follow you in the world, through Jesus, the Word become flesh. **Amen.**

PRELUDE

God of the Fertile Fields
Sally Harmon, organ

arrs. Behnke/Willan

WELCOME & CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed,
which is the smallest of seeds on earth;
**it grows up and becomes the greatest of shrubs,
and the birds of the air make nests in its shade.**
Give thanks to God, whose promised reign is coming.
Thanks be to God!

HYMN 714: *God of the Fertile Fields

**God of the fertile fields,
shaper of earth that yields
our daily bread:
forth from your bounteous hand
come gifts your love has planned,
that all in every land
be clothed and fed.**

**We would be stewards true,
holding in trust from you
all that you give;
help us in love to share,
teach us like you to care
for people everywhere,
that all may live.**

**As grows the hidden seed
to fruit that serves our need,
so your reign grows.
Let all our toil be used,
no gift of yours abused,
no humble task refused
your love bestows.**

**God of the countryside,
dear to the Christ who died
to make us one:
we pledge our lives anew
in faithful love to you.
Guide all we say and do.
Your will be done.**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

When we gather to worship God,
we remember that we are God's people,
but we have often preferred our way instead of God's.
Trusting God's power to make us new persons in Christ,
let us confess our sin before God and one another.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, the parable of the mustard seed teaches us that a little faith can produce great work in your kingdom. Yet we are too timid to bear the fruit of your righteousness, for we walk by sight and not by faith. Forgive us, Lord; we do not uphold the poor or the oppressed. We do not advocate for the powerless or the voiceless. We do not sacrifice ourselves for the needs of our neighbors. Renew us with the love of Christ so that we live no longer for ourselves, but for Christ who became the seed of your righteousness in us. Amen.

***DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

We who walk by faith and not by sight believe the good news—
If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!
Praise be to God for the mercy and grace that forgives our sins. Alleluia. Amen!

RESPONSE: *Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen, Amen.**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

GIFT OF MUSIC

Like a Tree
Penny Andrist, Pam Burns, Kellie Pifer trio
Sally Harmon, piano

arr. Beery

The Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: reader, Scott Swanholm

Holy Spirit, by your mysterious power speak to us your truth and show us your wisdom, that we may know you more deeply and serve you more faithfully, for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig

from the lofty top of a cedar;

I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one

from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it

on a high and lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,

and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;

in the shade of its branches will nest

winged creatures of every kind.

All the trees of the field shall know

that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,

I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree

and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;

I will accomplish it.

May God bless the reading and hearing of this portion of the holy Word.

SECOND READING: Mark 4:26-34

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON: The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey

HYMN 36: *For the Fruit of All Creation

For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.

For the gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God.

For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor,
God's will be done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will be done.

In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will be done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.

For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** Taken from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: Preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain, and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Responding to the Word

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Total Praise

Smallwood

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bearing the Word into the World

***HYMN 263:** *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

bring forth the royal diadem,

and crown him Lord of all!

Bring forth the royal diadem,

and crown him Lord of all!

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,

ye ransomed from the fall,

hail him who saves you by his grace,

and crown him Lord of all!

Hail him who saves you by his grace,

and crown him Lord of all!

Let every kindred, every tribe

on this terrestrial ball

to him all majesty ascribe,

and crown him Lord of all!

To him all majesty ascribe,

and crown him Lord of all!

O that with yonder sacred throng

we at his feet may fall!

We'll join the everlasting song,

and crown him Lord of all!

We'll join the everlasting song,

and crown him Lord of all!

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

arr. Johnson