

**HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**ORDER OF WORSHIP July 18, 2020**

**Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness (stand)**

P: In the name of God, the Father, Who has created all things in the universe for the sake of His dear children.

**C: And the Son, Who has redeemed His people from their sins,**

P: And the Spirit, Who moves us to accept the gifts of our salvation and of God's creation with joy.

**C: We gather for renewal in worship.**

*Silence for reflection and self-examination*

P: Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.

**C: From depths of grief I cry to you O Lord. My voice is trying to reach your heart and, break through with cries and sighing. If you keep a record of our sin and hold against us what we have thought and said and done, who then, can stand before you?**

P: God wants you to be absolutely sure of His love and to be totally confident that you have His full forgiveness for all of your sins because of what Jesus Christ has done for you. As you trust in Him, you become as dear to the Father as His own Son and can hear Him speak to you, "This is My dear child, My chosen, My child in whom I delight."

**C: Amen.**

**KYRIE**

P: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

P: 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.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

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

**C: Amen.**

## **THE HYMN OF PRAISE (*sung*)**

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia!

**C: Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,  
whose blood set us free to be people of God.  
Power and riches and wisdom and strength,  
and honor and blessing and glory are his.**

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.

**Sing with all the people of God  
and join in the hymn of all creation:  
Blessing and honor and glory and might  
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God,  
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign.  
Alleluia. Alleluia.**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

## **HYMN LSB 507 Holy, Holy, Holy!**

**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

**Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
Which wert and art and evermore shalt be.**

**Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,  
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,  
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,  
Perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.**

**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS (be seated)

### Isaiah 55:6-13

Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thorn bush will grow the juniper, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."

### Psalm 4

(Read Responsively-Reader=unbold **Congregation=BOLD**)

Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

**How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods**

Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

**Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.**

Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD.

**Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?" Let the light of your face shine on us.**

Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound.

**In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.**

### Romans 8:18-23

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

## **GOSPEL**

R: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

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

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear." "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

R: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ**

### **HYMN LSB 700 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**

**Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation,  
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.**

**Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit  
Into ev'ry troubled breast;  
Let us all in Thee inherit;  
Let us find Thy promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
Set our hearts at liberty.**

Come, Almighty, to deliver;  
Let us all Thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Nevermore 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.

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 heav'n we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

#### Sermon- God's Divine Order

When I started college in 1958, one of the courses I signed up for was biology. I will never forget a lecture the professor gave on the cell--the basic building block of all forms of life. He compared a cell to a chicken egg: the cell had a nucleus like the yolk of an egg, a fluid surrounding the nucleus called the cytoplasm like the white of an egg, and a cell wall like the shell of an egg. There were tiny organisms within the cell that had exotic names like ribosomes and chromosomes and a Golgi apparatus and an endoplasmic reticulum. Biologists understood what some of these organisms did, but had no clue as to what the others did. The cell reproduced itself by dividing in two through a process called mitosis. All in all the cell seemed like a fairly simple thing. Since then, however, scientists have learned a lot more about the cell. They have developed microscopes that are far more powerful than the ones they had in 1958, including electron microscopes which can discern things as small as molecules. Through these microscopes and other research biologists have discovered that a cell is vastly more complex than they had imagined. In fact the complexity of a single cell has been compared to the complexity of a factory the size of Detroit--a factory which can reproduce itself in a matter of seconds. And there are over 30 trillion cells in a human body. As the psalmist wrote, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made. "God's creation displays an intricate design, a divine order in things that are as small as a cell and as large as a galaxy. In today's three Bible lessons, Jesus, Isaiah and Paul all describe various aspects of this divine order and use them as analogies to explain how God works spiritually in the lives of his children. We'll start with Isaiah. "as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, providing seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (*Isaiah 55:10-11*) Just as God sends down rain and snow to engender organic life on the earth, so he sends down his word to engender spiritual life in his children.

And just as organic life bears fruit that contains seeds which engender new organic life, so do his children bear spiritual fruit which engenders spiritual life in others. As life begets life in the organic realm, life begets life in the spiritual realm as well. And when God's word has done its work, it returns to him just as water evaporates and returns to heaven--to be sent forth again and again. The divine cycle of nature mirrors the divine cycle of salvation. Finally--and this is a note of warning--when God's word returns to him from doing its work, it has always achieved his purpose in sending it. God's word is a sharp, double-edged sword which divides people into two groups: those who believe it and those who don't. Those who believe it receive spiritual life while those who reject it remain spiritually comatose--spiritual eunuchs who in the end die and are no more. For the fruit-bearers of the Spirit, there will be eternal joy and celebration. "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands." For those who reject spiritual life, there awaits a very different fate. Divine order, divine mission, divine accomplishment and divine celebration. A perfect cycle in God's divine order. Paul takes up the theme in *chapter eight* of his *Letter To The Romans*: "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Under the tyranny of sin, all creation is in bondage to decay. This bondage is described in Newton's second law of thermodynamics which states that the universe is in a state of deterioration as all things move from order to disorder. Electricity and light and mechanical energy all dissipate into heat. Organic life dies and decomposes. Roads deteriorate, cars wear out, engines fail. [Pete Tivtze's saying about rotary motors] This deterioration is evident not only in physical things like motors, but in human society as well. Governments are corrupted by lust for more and more power, companies fail from inept management, the social fabric frays as moral and spiritual decay set in. Sooner or later, everything falls apart because all creation is in bondage to decay. We're seeing a close-up of this process right now in what the Covid virus is doing to our country. As infection and disease continue to spread, depression and despair grow. Political factions point fingers at each other as unrest and anger grows. We're beginning to wonder: will anything ever be the same? But as the hymn goes, "God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform." He brings strength out of suffering, health out of sickness and life out of death. So Paul compares the suffering of creation to the suffering of a woman in labor. "all creation groans as in pains of childbirth...." Like a woman whose labor pains end with the arrival of new life, the suffering of creation will one day end with the birth of a new heavens and a new earth. On that day, God will reverse the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics and restore creation to its original pristine order. A new Garden of Eden will be born, where the soil will no longer grudgingly yield up its fruit and man will no longer live by the sweat of his brow. Even now, we who have placed our faith and our hope in the savior of mankind can taste the firstfruits of that new creation in our faith and hope. Finally we come to Jesus' parable about a farmer who goes out to sow grain. "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear." This is one crazy farmer! Instead of sowing his precious seed only on good, fertile soil, he scatters it all over the place with no regard as to where it lands, so that most of it is wasted. But is it really wasted? Let's see. First he scatters it on a path. Paths are walkways where the soil has been trodden down by many feet and its surface is hard. Seed that falls on it lies on the surface and is exposed to the heat of the sun and the attention of birds. Between the sun and the birds, the seed is either scorched or eaten and nothing comes of it. He also sows seed where the soil is rocky. Some of it comes up, but, since the soil is full of rocks, the plants can't develop healthy roots, and when the sun comes out they wither and die. He sows seed among thorny weeds--probably what we would call "thistles. "Now I am not only an expert on thistles, I am president of the thistle-haters club. They are big, horrid, nasty, prickly things that you can only handle with heavy gloves. And when you try to pull them out, they break off at the ground level, leaving the roots to shoot up another thistle. Some thistle haters claim they can even hear the weed laugh as it comes loose from its root. The only thing that will kill them is roundup and I bless the day it came into being. In any case, the thorny weeds choke out the good plants and they die. Finally, some of the seed falls on good soil and produces an abundant crop. Jesus explains the meaning of the parable. The seed is the Gospel--the good news of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. It is sown everywhere just as the Gospel is preached everywhere—to people in all nations. God does this, knowing that fewer people will believe the Gospel and be saved than those who will not. Jesus said, "...wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction...but small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and only a few find it." Some people are like the hard dry path: they have hardened their hearts against God and have no use for anything he has to say to them. Others are like the rocky soil: initially they receive the Gospel with enthusiasm, but they put down no roots and when opposition or persecution arises, they abandon it and return to unbelief. Then there are people who are like the seeds sown among thorny weeds. The weeds represent worldly attractions like wealth and power and prestige, and the love of them chokes out the desire to follow Christ. They choose mammon over God and you cannot serve both God and mammon. Finally, like the seed that falls on good soil there are those who hear and believe and persevere in their faith and are saved. Then they are able to discern God's divine order behind the deterioration of a sin-distorted world. Faith sees where eyesight and reason fail. There is an order to things—God's divine order. It isn't always visible to us because our seeing and our thinking are impaired by sin. But the order is there—in the growth cycle of nature, in the annual dying and rebirth of creation, and in the sowing and growing of the Gospel seed. It just takes faith to see it. Amen.

#### **NICENE CREED (*stand*)**

**All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

### LORD'S PRAYER

All: 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.

### HYMN LSB 763 When Peace Like a River

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way;  
When sorrows, like sea billows, roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate  
And hath shed his own blood for my soul.  
[Refrain]

He lives—Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more.  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!  
[Refrain]

And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;  
Even so it is well with my soul.  
[Refrain]

### BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ☩ give you peace.

C: Amen.