

Gran-Park-Rollag Parish and Living Grace Lutheran Church
In ministry partnership since 2017

Gran-Park-Rollag Parish

3 Churches – 1 Ministry: Energized by God
To celebrate, share & show God's love
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Living Grace Lutheran Church

A worshipping community of the ELCA focused on making known God's love and grace by:
Welcoming Everyone, Sharing Jesus' story, Growing in faith and Serving beyond ourselves.
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Worships at The Garrick Theater,
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Sunday, July 12, 2020 - Virtual Holy Communion Worship Service
Led by Pr. Hope Deutscher, Pr. Jim Greene, and Andrea Keene
Music Provided by: Pam Aakre, Piano; Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Welcome/Announcements

- *We have a variety of ways we are connecting with people – continuing Bible Studies and Book Studies on Zoom. Check out our Facebook page and Newsletter for details.*
- *Be a subscriber to the YouTube channel – Rollag Lutheran Church – when you do, you become one of the first people to know when a worship service is available for you to watch and it also helps boost our visibility with others who may be looking for a service to watch!*
- *The July-August GPR Newsletter*
- *A word about our service today:*
 - *You can follow along – bulletins are available on our websites!*
 - *Thanks to the children for being a part of the worship service. Andrea will have a children's sermon in a few minutes.*
 - *Today, we again invite you to participate in Virtual Communion.*
 - *A big thank-you to Pam Aakre and Pastor Hope for providing the music today.*
 - **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS??**
- *We have a "Smart Team" who will be gathering to help us transition appropriately into indoor worship when the time is right. Our next outdoor worship will be at Rollag on July 19th on the lawn outside Rollag Lutheran at 9:30 AM. (SLIDE WITH DETAILS)*

Invitation to the Offering - Special Music: Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil Pam Aakre, Piano

SLIDE: *Thank you for remembering the importance of continuing to Tithe your financial gifts. You can mail your offering to your church or give through Tithe.ly online (mobile and online option) or by mail. Visit livinggracehawley.org or gprparish.org for specific information.*

Prayer: We bring our gifts because tendrils of God's love have worked their ways into the soil of our hearts. Sisters and brothers, let us yield our lives to God's abundant harvest. As the sower casts seeds abundantly, hopefully, so we long to participate in your seeding of the world. Receive these gifts as tokens of our lives. Send your cultivating Spirit to work among us until we yield and grow in grace, for we pray in the name of Jesus, who came out of love for the world. Amen. (From *Feasting on the Word*)

Confession and Forgiveness

In our lives we can run into trouble when we let temptation begin the domino effect. We can be tempted, wrestle with it, rationalize why we should give in, give in and often feel bad, then either make excuses for ourselves, deny we did anything, or blame others for our actions. We make confession today to ask God to help us get out of temptations effects.

Gracious God, we confess we have been part of a process which has been hurtful, dishonest, and destructive to others and ourselves. Help us to know when our thoughts are off track; help us to feel when we're heading in the wrong direction; help us to realize we always have options which are better than giving into the domino effect temptation tricks us into.

Hear again these words of forgiveness:

It is God's desire that we realize we are all part of God's family and whenever we hurt ourselves or others, we all suffer. It is God's desire that we all work together and that our every thought, word, or action be helpful. God forgives us all our sins so we can learn to say and do what is helpful, kind, and necessary. With this forgiveness may we be encouraged and be an encourager to one another, guided by God's grace and love. Amen.

Children's Message Andrea Keene, GPR Youth Director

**Hymn – *Almighty God, Your Word is Cast* #516 ELW / #234 LBW Pam Aakre, Piano,
Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute**

Verse 1: Al-might-y God, your word is cast like seed in-to the ground;
 Now let the dew of heav'n de-scend and righ-teous fruits a-bound.

Verse 2: Let not the sly sa-tan-ic foe this ho-ly seed re-move,
 But give it root in ev-'ry heart to bring forth fruits of love.

Verse 3: Let not the world's de-ceit-ful cares the ris-ing plant de-story,
 But let it yield a hun-dred-fold the fruits of peace and joy.

Verse 4: So when the pre-cious seed is sown, life-giv-ing grace be-stow,
 That all whose souls the truth re-ceive its sav-ing pow'r may know.

Scripture: Isaiah 55:10-13

¹⁰For 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,

¹¹so 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.

¹²For 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.

¹³Instead 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.

Message

Pr. Jim Greene

When the kids were younger I taught them all about dominoes- lots of fun! Later, I found they had expanded to VHS tapes. The kids, their wheels turning, wondered: "What if we used people?" "As long as I get to be first and start the push" I said!

The domino effect is what Isaiah is writing about as God's promise to the Israelites. The domino starts with a visual: Rain/Snow THEN it will bring forth/sprout THEN provide Seed/Bread!

This visual points to this truth in verse 11: "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." God's word: rain; sprout; food!

God's word, like the rain, begins the domino effect and our thoughts, words, and actions are the growth which helps to pass on "God's Word" more efficiently and completely. The food is that we "be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with God in the next!"

* God's word is what gives the life changing power to the water in Baptism and the Bread & Wine in 1st Communion & Confirmation!

* God's word is what gives the life changing power through the various parts which make up a worship service.

* God's word is what helps us live out the domino effect in our day to day lives as we live, and breathe, and celebrate, share, and show God's love.

God's word is what helps us in the domino effect as the first push- as we remember we're created in the image of God, we're loved, forgiven, and never on our own especially as we trust God's call to love, forgive, and to serve one another as Jesus "waters" all of us to do!

May we learn to take in God's word and invite the Holy Spirit to start the domino effect as we learn to be helpful to one another- especially when we'd rather shove than nudge!

Virtual Communion

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this in the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this in the remembrance of me.

Communion

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Hymn of the Month: *His Name is Wonderful* Pam Aakre, Piano

*His name is Won-der-ful, his name is Won-der-ful, his name is won-der-ful,
Je-sus, my Lord; he is the might-y King, Mas-ter of ev-ery-thing,
His name is Won-der-ful, Je-sus my Lord. He's the great Shep-herd, the
Rock of all a-ges, Al-might-y God is he; bow down be-fore him,
Love and a-dore him, his name is Won-der-ful, Je-sus my Lord.*

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 (HOPE)

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!"

¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When 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. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet 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. ²²As 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. ²³But 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."

Message

Pr. Hope Deutscher

Let us pray...God of life, by the power of your Spirit come to us now. Plow our hearts with your living Word until we who are broken become fertile with your love, for we long to bear fruit in a world that is wasting. We pray in the name of Jesus, whose charge we bear. **Amen.**

Seeds. Every winter as the snow is melting I hear gardeners talk about the seed catalogs. They are excited about the possibilities of what kinds of seeds to buy...and where to plant them. I like to buy plants already started...in many ways, someone else has done the hard work. Last summer I was staying at the Holy Wisdom Monastery in Madison, Wisconsin attending a retreat for pastors. Part of the monastery's mission is to turn the earth back to its natural landscape – restarting the wildflowers and now collecting seeds to turn back to the earth and continue to grow the wildflower landscape – not just for its beauty but for its purposes in helping the natural habitat and feeding the bugs and butterflies that have become more plentiful. As we were leaving the monastery, the community gave each of us a packet of wildflower seeds: Ohio Spiderwort, Foxglove, Common Milkweed, and Verbena.

All beautiful flowers. So why are they still in this packet? You see I began dreaming of where I could plant them back here in northwestern Minnesota or my backyard in Fargo. But I keep holding onto them because I don't want to fail at where I plant them. If I plant them in my backyard, what happens if I should ever move? Will the next homeowner love them enough not to kill them? Or maybe God is inviting me to create a quiet flower garden with wild flowers and perennials at one of our churches? So...I wait and hold on to the seeds. But as I read this gospel text, I think about us as sowers of seeds. Do we wait to share seeds of our faith for the right moment because we are not sure if our words and God's word will fall on deaf ears or ears that are angry at "the church"?

According to Jesus – we have four different soils...or 4 different ways people respond to hearing God's Word:

I like how Pastor Eugene Peterson describes these hearers:

When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn't take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person's heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road.

- Has there been a time in your life when your heart felt like a well-worn path and God couldn't reach you... when you just wanted to be angry at God, you were not ready to hear more words from God...but rather you wanted to walk the other way.

20-21 "The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.

- was there a time when your heart felt like you did not have much depth for God's word – maybe it was when you first entered a church and it was basic information that you could hear and absorb. All you want to know is the basics. Tell me what to do and when to do it.

22 "The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it.

- Have you ever noticed that when we begin attending to the whirlwind of following earthly pursuits – God's word gets choked out and becomes less of a priority.

23 "The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams."

- Imagine that good soil – where tree seed pods truly grow and flourish, where grass blades are strong and flowers abundantly flourish with color...it is not by accident that all of God's creation grows in that place that soil is tended to, nurtured and fed with fertilizer and nutrients...it is worked with loving hands...so that seeds can generously be thrown out by a gardener – and will grow.

In our parable, the farmer sowed generously scatters seeds EVERYWHERE to ensure some would grow – and there would be a harvest! Now you might find this man's farming method crazy and irresponsible – especially when we might be thinking about our investment in such a field...and what could, or could not be the return...but in Jesus' day there were no automated machines to run straight rows in the field...seeds had to be sown by hand...the farmer walked across the field he threw handfuls of seed onto the ground from a large bag slung across his shoulders...there were not neat little tidy rows of plants.

Not all seeds sprouted, and even the plants that grew had varying yields. But Jesus says: Don't be discouraged – it's not about planting straight rows of Christians...it's about scattering the seeds and scattering them generously! But it is our job to scatter seeds generously...and the first step is tending to the soil of our own heart. Then we can help nurture other people's hearts...and it get's to Jesus' point in our gospel text: When the disciples asked him, *Why do you tell stories?* He replied: "You've been given insight into God's kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn't been given to them. I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight."

It's about better when we share the seeds of God's love and kingdom, rather than store them for a better day. It's not just about throwing seeds onto the ground and hoping they'll produce...it's about tending to them and nurturing them and feeding them. When we share God's seeds, we don't just stop with an invite or sharing God's Word...we invite them know about Jesus, we nurture our youth in Sunday School and showing them God's creation, we pray for one another and tend to one another in joys and in our pains.

Whether we encounter a road, gravel, weeds or good soil, may we hear this blessing from the Wisdom Monastery:

*May you...like the milkweed and the foxglove of the prairie
Assent fresh each morning to being scattered
and buried in the dark moist soil of God.
May you...like the Spiderwort and the Verbena
of the prairie sow and be sown
In the God who loves this world
beyond measure and without regret.
Bless you. You are holy Ground. Amen.*

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray...Holy God, we were yours before we drew breath, and still we will be yours when the pulse of life ceases. In every fragile, reckless moment, we belong to you.

We thank you for the desire of our parents who continues to nurture us.

May the love we have received spill gratitude from our hearts.

May the wounds we carry open our hearts to the needs of others.

May we recognize in your mercy the faithfulness that judges and redeems every human bond.

We lift to you now all that seems irreconcilable: in our families, in our schools and workplaces, in our nation, in your church, and in the world. We pray for those we identify as leaders in every sphere of life. We pray for our president, governor, and all city leaders and for all whose decisions weigh heavily on others.

Even so, Lord, give us the courage to name *ourselves* as those whose responsibility is great. May you teach *us* to act, to tend the world you love: to sow more than we reap, to heal more than we wound, to make room for others as you made room for us.

Redeeming God,

Let our hearts be “good soil” open to hearing your word and scattering it generously until we hear your gospel echo in each stranger’s story and see your image reflected on every face, for we pray in the name of Jesus,
who unsettles our lives for the sake of your love. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us...**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.**

Benediction

As you go into the world this week –

May you sow the seeds of God’s love and gospel....

Not judging the soil on which you stand –

but give thanks for God will supply growth...

bringing forth fruit from unexpected places.

May God, the creator, † Jesus Christ our Redeemer,

and the Holy Spirit, who sustains us,

bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn – Lord, Dismiss us With Your Blessing #545 ELW / #259 LBW

Pam Aakre, Piano and Pr. Hope Deutscher, Flute

Verse 1: Lord, dis-miss us with your bless-ing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
let us each, your love pos-sess-ing, tri-umph in re-deem-ing grace.
Oh, re-fresh us; oh, re-fresh us, trav-'ling through this wil-der-ness.

Verse 2: Thanks we give and ad-o-ra-tion for your gos-pel's joy-ful sound.
May the fruits of your sal-va-tion in our hearts and lives a-bound.
Ev-er faith-ful, ev-er faith-ful to your truth may we be found.

Verse 3: Sav-ior, when your love shall call us from our strug-gling pil-grim way,
let no fear of death ap-pall us, glad your sum-mons to o-bey.
May we ev-er, may we ev-er reign with you in end-less day.