

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 13, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey

Centering Words

Call To Worship “*Spirit of the Living God*” Dan Greshel

Opening Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer 895

Honoring our 2020 and 2021 Graduates

*Affirmation of Faith “*The Apostles’ Creed*” 881

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory

*Doxology “*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*” Dan Greshel

Prayer of Illumination

Old Testament Reading 1 Samuel 15: 34-16:13 254-255 (O.T.)

Psalms 20 485 (O.T.)

Epistle Reading 2 Corinthians 5: 6-17 171 (N.T.)

Gospel Reading Mark 4: 26-34 40-41 (N.T.)

Sermon *How the Kingdom Grows* John D. Jordan

*Hymn “*This is a Day of New Beginnings*” 383

*Dismissal With Benediction

*Benediction Response “*God Be with You till We Meet Again*” Dan Greshel

*Postlude Christopher A. McCroskey

*The Congregation May Stand

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor:	<i>John D. Jordan</i>	AV Assistant:	<i>K. C. Warble</i>
Choir Director:	<i>Christopher A. McCroskey</i>	Soloist:	<i>Dan Greshel</i>
Church Musician		Time Together:	<i>Mary Louise Robinson</i>

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

Graduates for 2020

Brandon Edwards
Matthew Martin

Graduate for 2021

Brady Derrick

Today’s Lovely Flowers are given to the Glory of God.

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...

Ruth Frady Tom Lloyd Patsy Shuler Lynn Martin Kathy Aiello George Taylor
Ted Frady Oren Edwards Latson Lewis Steve Aiello Steve White

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Carolyn Hardee; Francis & Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Georgeann Pace; Shirley Padgett; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Wayne Tallon; Irvin Wells

Family and Friends: Ghent Brewer (brother-in-law of Jeanette Hornsby); Beverly Graves (friend of Becky Derrick); Mitch Kelly (Dale Wells’ nephew); Chip Hooker (Wayne Hooker’s father); Robert Bradley (Business Associate of Simon Ross); Dave Burrell (Business Associate of Tommy Gleaton); Gene Odom (grandfather of Mark Branham); Gary Becton (friend of Mark Branham); Audrey Cassady (sister-in-law of Mary Louise Robinson); Rusty Browning (friend of Erin Derrick); Monnie Tiller, Mrs. Miles (friends of Chris Derrick); Donna Walker (coworker of Jack Stevens); Ruby Pennington (friend of Laurie Knapp); Rick Baldwin (nephew of Tommy Johnson); Judy Bauer (cousin of Marty Johnson); Betty Jean Newton (sister-in-law of Mary Kamoroff); Adrin & Linda Hargett (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Danielle Spotts (co-worker of Kathy White); Vickie Edwards (neighbor of Kathy White); George Duke, Brenda Grier (friends of Lynn Martin); Heather Stevens, Ty Moore, George Dorn (friends of Kay Jordan); Teddy Derrick (uncle of Arvan Derrick); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Dianne Schmotzer (sister-in-law of Gale Frady); Denise Paul (cousin of Gale Frady); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (friends of Gale Frady); Ray Culbreth’s Group House; Nellie Gantt (mother of friend of Ray Culbreth); Amelia Zinski (great-niece of Linda Maloch); Wayne Blair (son of Dot Johnson); Xavier Crane (grandnephew of John Ballentine); Janet Beck (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...
In-Person Attendance 06/06 Worship: 25

OUR GIFTS ...
General Fund 06/6 \$ 7,050.00

OUR SERVICE ...
OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

TODAY Graduate Recognition
6/14 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
Church Council, 6 p.m.
6/17 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
6/18 Office Closed

Today we celebrate our Graduates from 2020 and 2021. Our Time Together will be in their honor.

Church Council will meet on Monday, June 14, at 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary. You may participate in person or by Zoom.

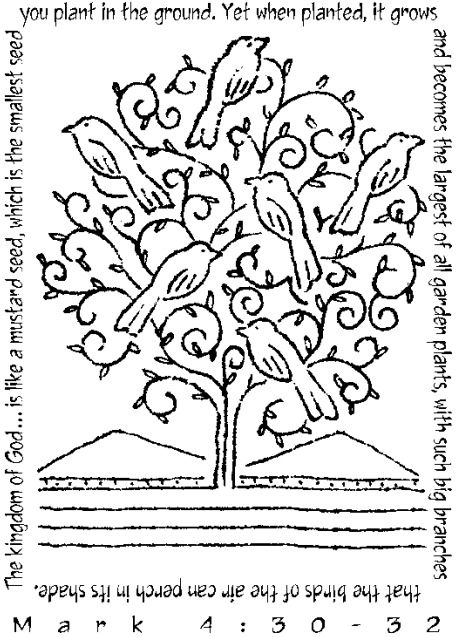
Next Sunday, June 20, is Father’s Day. Our Time Together next Sunday will be in their honor.



Ministers
Pastor
Resident Bishop
District Superintendent
The Congregation
John D. Jordan
Jonathan Holston
Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



1201 Mohawk Drive
West Columbia, SC 29169
Telephone: 803.794.7777
E-mail: trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com
Website: www.trinityumcwc.org

Mark 4: 26-34

Kay and I began taking our dog, Carmen, on walks around the church grounds during the pandemic as many of our walking paths were closed. (If you are interested, it is about ½ mile around the perimeter of the church property.) We are always amazed at the changes in the garden, particularly during the spring and summer. Initially we see just plowed up dirt, but we know that seeds have been planted by Ted, Bobby, Kenneth, and others who work the garden. Then we see the sprouts peeking through the ground. Small shoots begin to rise up and grow with each passing day. Finally, we see the fruit: corn, squash, watermelons, okra, beans and so much more.

I know that, while the gardeners plant the seed, water, weed, and fertilize the garden, they don't make the seeds grow and bear fruit. I think that Ted would admit that while he does all he can to help, he does not make the plants grow and bear fruit. That process of growing from a seed to bearing fruit is created by God. It is a process that is amazing and mysterious even with all our scientific understanding. Consider how much more amazing and mysterious this would have been to someone 2000 years ago.

Jesus uses these two parables of seeds as a comparison to the Kingdom of God. They show that God's kingdom grows, how it grows, and what it grows into.

In the first parable, a person plants some seed. After planting the seed the person goes to sleep. Even as the person sleeps the seed sprouts and grows, eventually bearing fruit. There are three points about the Kingdom of God that are revealed in this parable.

The first is that the person that plants the seed does not make the plants grow. It is God that makes the plants grow. The seeds of the Kingdom were planted by Jesus, who through his life, death, and resurrection ushered in the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom has been growing through the course of the past 2000 years. It has grown from a small ragtag group of about 120 disciples of Jesus to the global Church we are today. This growth is not due to the work of people, even people like the Apostles, the Saints, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Billy Graham or Mother Theresa to name a few. The growth of the Kingdom comes from God. While humans are God's hands and feet in the world, it is God working through humans to grow the kingdom just as it is God who causes the seeds in the garden to grow.

We may plant seeds of faith in others by sharing our faith stories, inviting them to enter into our fellowship, or just being with them, showing love through a difficult time. Even as we plant seeds of faith, we cannot cause faith to grow. God causes faith to grow in us and others as we plant seeds of faith.

Secondly, this growth may come in mysterious and unexplainable ways. The Great Awakening revival in the 1740s began with Johnathan Edwards' sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. Contrary to what one might think Edwards was not a great orator. He tended to read his manuscript with little expression. The first time he delivered *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, it was received as any of his other sermons. But the second time he delivered it, something happened and the revival began. It was the moving of the Spirit, not Edwards or a great delivery, and began the revival. It was the power of the Holy Spirit that began that revival and led to the growth of the Kingdom. It is the mysterious power of God that grows the Kingdom.

Finally, this parable also points to the end time. At the time when the harvest is ripe, the one who planted the seeds will come to reap the harvest. Jesus has planted the seeds of God's kingdom and will return to reap the harvest.

I know many have been searching the scriptures, particularly the apocalyptic works of Daniel and Revelation, to find just how close we are to that time when Jesus returns. They look for signs, the antichrist, the return of Israel, etc, to predict the second coming. I believe it is not in these apocalyptic signs, but when the harvest is ripe, that Jesus will return. It is when the creation bears the fruits of God's Kingdom- love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control- that the Kingdom will have come and Jesus will return to reap the harvest.

It is God that causes the Kingdom to grow in mysterious and unexplainable ways. God grows the kingdom within us in ways we may expect- worship, Bible study, fellowship, and service- and in ways we may not expect, such as learning a lesson in humility by playing chess with a person suffering from schizophrenia who beats you in two moves. God's Kingdom will grow until the harvest is ripe and God's kingdom is on earth as it is in heaven.

The Kingdom grows, but into what? We see this in the second parable. Jesus equates the Kingdom of God to that of a mustard seed. A mustard seed is very tiny. But it grows into a large bush. The one you see on the screen, which was at the site of Bethsaida, is as tall as the light pole, roughly 25 feet in my estimation. This tiny seed will grow into this large bush.

Wait a minute! God's kingdom will grow into a bush? Shouldn't that be a tree? Other kingdoms had been compared to mighty trees: Judah in Ezekiel 17:23, Assyria in Ezekiel 31:6, Babylon in Daniel 4: 12, 20-22. A tree is big, tall, and majestic. A tree represents power and might. A tree is strong and the timber can be used to build strong buildings and ships. But a bush doesn't create an image of strength and power. It can't be used for much. It seems kind of a weak metaphor.

But the mustard bush provides shelter for birds, particularly small birds that build their nests on or near the ground. The branches are large enough to support the nest. The branches are low enough to provide an escape from predators. The branches are dense enough to provide shelter from the elements and overhead predators. The bush provides shelter and protection for these small, weak, vulnerable creatures in God's creation.

The analogy of the Kingdom of God being like a bush instead of a tree reveals that the Kingdom of God is not based on power and might nor is it found within the powerful and mighty. The Kingdom of God is found in that which provides shelter and protection to the weak and vulnerable. This is what the Kingdom of God is, a Kingdom that provides shelter for the weak and vulnerable, not the strong and mighty. This is wonderfully captured in the quote from St Francis de Sales, "Nothing is so strong as gentleness and nothing so gentle as real strength." Strength in the Kingdom of God is found in gentleness, protecting and caring for the weak.

This Kingdom of gentleness is growing. God's Kingdom has been and will continue to grow in ways we cannot understand. We are to help the kingdom grow like those who work in the garden help it grow by watering, weeding, and fertilizing, even though God does the growing. We are to plant seeds of the Kingdom of God, seeds that grow in gentle strength. Let us go to plant seeds of gentle strength that bear the fruit of the kingdom, so we may be in the harvest when the time is ripe and Jesus comes again.