

Old Testament Lesson to describe the action of the Word of God in the world. The Word of God grows even in the face of threats and resistance, it takes root, grows and produces its fruit. The kingdom grows in a way that parallels the working of the parables themselves. It happens before peoples eyes, but they don't see it. The Word of God is spoken in their ears and they don't hear it. God has granted us the freedom to grow. He plants us, but we want to grow imprisoned out of His control. We gain freedom only when we give up the control and allow Him to produce the fruits, allow Him to show forth the results of salvation (the work of Jesus,) in and through our very lives.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

℟ O Holy and immortal God, You cover Yourself with light as a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a curtain. You make the clouds Your dwelling. You walk upon the wings of the wind. In humility of soul we give You thanks and praise for Your manifold kindness.

We thank You that You have given the world its daily bread, providing the Earth with its wonders. We are in awe of the seed whose power unfolds in abundant harvest. With the light and the air, the dew and the rain together, You make the efforts of the farmers so fruitful.

O Lord, we hunger for spiritual knowledge: Give us faith. Our soul yearns for truth: Lead us to Your Holy Word, there to find Your sublime doctrines. We cry for forgiveness and pardon: Turn us to Jesus as the One Who will make us clean. We crave for life: Feed us with the very Body and Blood of Christ that we are made one in the power of His Resurrection, that we will have life eternal.

We acknowledge Your loving kindness to our country, and we thank You for the good You have given us. Give strength to all the forces of righteousness in our midst, and overthrow all the powers of evil. Be the Helper of all our families. Implant Your Word in the hearts of our children and Your Love in our parents. Free the afflicted from their troubles and bring them ever closer to You, that they may know abundant life and live, serve and praise You.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

O God, You see us as we are, not the way we would want to be, and yet You continue to Love and care for us. Therefore we ask that You would fill us with such faith, promise and love that it is obvious to everyone that we are Your child. In the name of Jesus we pray.

© Amen.

PROPER TEN

Chant Tone



Introit

The Lord is merciful and — gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in
| steadfast love.

As for man, his days | are like grass;*
he flourishes like a flower | of the
field;
for the wind passes over it, and | it is
gone,*
and its place knows | it no more.
But the steadfast love of the Lord is
from everlasting to everlasting on
those who — fear Him,*
and His righteousness to children's
— children.

to those who keep His | covenant*
and remember to do His
com — mandments.

The Lord has established His throne in
the — heavens,*
and His kingdom rules | over all.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

The Lord is merciful and — gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in
| steadfast love.

(Antiphon, Psalm 103:8;
Psalm 103:15-19)

Collect of the Day

Blessèd Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed assurance of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and know | ledge of God!*
How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscruta | ble His ways!
For from Him and through Him and to Him | are all things.*
To Him be glory forever. — Amen.

(Romans 11:33, 36)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Almighty God, we come to You in adoration and praise. For calling us before the foundation of the world to be a part of Your kingdom, we give You thanks. For the riches of Your grace through Your Son Jesus Christ, we praise Your most Holy name. For revealing to us the mystery of Your will, we are grateful. Send us Your promised Holy Spirit that we may be inspired to hear Your Word of truth and live according to it. Having been redeemed at the price of Your Son's Blood, may we treasure this knowledge and do Your Holy will. Grant peace to our world, and help us live in harmony. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE TROUBLE WITH THE 4TH OF JULY IS THAT IT HAPPENS ONCE A YEAR. Which means that except for a few places (where events have them) fireworks are a once a year event. The wonder and the spectacle is over almost before it gets started. (The fire inspector thinks once a year is enough.) The wonder and spectacle of life in the knowledge of Jesus, is with us each and every day of our life. He is ever present to give us the good things of this life; the wonder of His protection against sin, death and Satan and the enduring peace with God and the promise that abounds in eternal life. We gather every Sunday to celebrate with awe our faith in God. God's goal is that the celebration of our life in Jesus is a daily event. Daily we worship Him for the Love He brought us through His life, His work, His death, His Resurrection.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Growth of the Gospel

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 103:8;) Psalm 103:15-19

Written by David, Psalm 103 is a song of devotion. The mercy of God is longer than the life of a man. God's righteousness extends from generations to generations.

COLLECT

According to The Reverend Dr Peter Toon, this prayer was written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and published in the Anglican "Book of Common Prayer" (1662.) It was used in some traditions as the Collect for Advent Two as early as 1979. We used it in The Lutheran Hymnal (1941) as the "Page 5," "Collect For the Word." In 2006 we placed it here in the liturgy. The words, "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest," are the progression in which God takes us from unbelief to salvation.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 55:10-13

Isaiah was beaten. These words that explain the action of rain and snow were written for a beaten down people. They had forsaken God, but He would never forsake them. They had stopped being faithful, but God would keep the promises of the seventh day of creation. God will keep His Word of protection to the people of the world just so that they can hear and be saved. He will make us free from our sin in Jesus.

GRADUAL—Romans 11:33, 36

In Romans 11, Paul lamented the fact that the Jews reject Jesus and therefore salvation. These two verses sing praise to God that the unbelief of the chosen people, resulted in we being chosen to believe.

EPISTLE LESSON—Romans 8:12-17

We owe a debt to this wonderful country in which we live, in that we are granted freedom. We owe a debt to God because of our life. Freedom is not free. Life is not free, but we can sell it. When we sell our freedom we become slaves. When we sell our life, we become slaves to sin and death. In this lesson Paul is telling us to live as the sons of God, made so by His efforts of adoption, so that we can call out to God in praise for the wonder of our life. We call out, not as slaves but we call Him, "Abba," (which is Aramaic for "Daddy.") We call God, "Daddy." All other religions teach their people to fear their gods, we are encouraged to call God The Father, "Daddy!" What a wonderful love is this!

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The parables in the Book of Matthew are concerned with the "Kingdom of Heaven." This particular parable concerns the Word of God which creates and sustains the kingdom. It combines with the Introit and the