



Bellflower UMC

July 16, 2023

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

GREETINGS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

OPENING PRAYER

PRELUDE¹ & CANDLE LIGHTING 

Here I am to worship. Here I am to bow down.

Here I am to say that You're my God.

You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy,

Altogether wonderful to me (2x)

CALL TO WORSHIP²

Come, let us worship God!

Come, let us worship our Creator!

¹ "Here I Am" by Tim Hughes. © 2000 Thankyou Music. Used by Permission.
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² Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, January 2023.

God is the great Sower, scattering seeds of life and abundance across the earth.

We are the soil the Sower plants, created to nurture and sustain the seeds of God's life-giving love.

God is the great Gardener, tilling and cultivating our soil with love and grace.


We notice the rocks and thorns in our soil and call on the Gardener's love and grace to transform us into good soil.

God is the great Life-giver, sowing seeds and tending the soil to produce the fruit of abundant life.

May we nurture and grow God's new reality, bearing the fruit of flourishing and abundance for all God's creation. Amen.

HYMN  404. Every Time I Feel the Spirit

SCRIPTURE Romans 8:1-11

HYMN  393. Spirit of the Living God

CHILDREN'S SERMON

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

LORD'S PRAYER - #895

RESPONSE 

Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Incline Thine ear to us,

and grant us Thy peace. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

SERMON

OFFERING & PEACE

DOXOLOGY - #95

CONFESSION & PARDON³

We know for sure that we do not have to talk God into forgiving us. God knows our need before we ask and has demonstrated in Jesus a therapeutic love that can never be exhausted. In confession, we get honest and ask the Spirit God to come in and put things right.

Let us pray.

**Loving God, Sower and Reaper of love,
we admit to you that we are like stony fields,
capable of growing goodness and sharing it around,
but also we allow goodness to wither and weeds to
flourish.**

**Your mercy has taken root in us,
but we do not share enough of it with others,
your justice has grown on us,
but we have inadequately implemented it,
your truth has showered on us,
but we have let it run to waste,
your love has blossomed among us,
but we have been slow to set fruit**

**Most loving God, please open the furrows of our lives
to receive again the seeds of your Gospel. Rain your
mercy upon us, shine your warmth and light into
every dark place, and bring forth in us not the
harvest we deserve but the harvest that in your
glorious love you have destined for us. Through
Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen!**

³ Adapted from Bruce Prewer, "Confession and Assurance,"
<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocA/44SUN15.htm>. Adapted with permission
of the author.

Listen, to this Word: “Where sin abounds, love much more abounds.” Receive from such abundance and give thanks. You, my siblings, are among the richest people in the world. You have the wealth of Christ with you always, even to the end of time.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Glory to God. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

SENDING FORTH⁴

Beloved, remember: you are dirt. May you go forth and receive the Gardener’s tending so that we may all become good soil ready to receive, nurture, and grow the seed of the gospel wherever we go. Amen.

POSTLUDE 🎵

Go Now In Peace

Week 29 Reading Plan:

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Isaiah 18-22	Isaiah 23-27	2 Kings 18:1-8 2 Chron 29-31 Psalm 48	Hosea 1-7	Hosea 8-14	Isaiah 28-30	Isaiah 31-34

Bellflower UMC spreads God's love within our church family and throughout our communities and world using our prayers, our gifts and our service; thus to become a shelter of love and a community of compassion..

To learn more, visit facebook.com/Bellflower.UMC

If you would like a prayer, a visit, a meal, to have Holy Communion brought to your home, or have any other need, please contact any church member or Pastor Rob (309-722-1500, rob@methodist.cc).

⁴ Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, January 2023.