

WEEKLY WORSHIP SHEET – TRINITY 2

Call to worship

'Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God.'
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)
Let us worship our Creator God,
who has given us the miracle of life
and sustains us through the sacred rhythms of planet Earth.

A gathering prayer

Here we are, Creator God, Lord and Spirit,
standing before you, grounded on the earth,
our hands stretched high like a tree.
You fill us with amazement, wonderful God. Amen

A prayer of approach

Creator God,
we bring to you all that is growing within us:
for you to bless and nurture.
We bring our prayers for the spread of your kingdom:
for you to bless and nurture.
We bring the initiatives for justice multiplying among nations:
for you to bless and nurture.
We bring the hopes and dreams, tiny and big,
of all your children around the world:
for you to bless and nurture.
In Jesus' name. Amen

Prayer of adoration

God of mystery,
Sower, Saviour, Spirit,
we worship you;
and we ask you to give us:
eyes to notice where the seeds of your kingdom are growing,
courage to show them to others,
faith enough to help nurture them,
and a heart that delights in their harvest. Amen

Ezekiel 17:22-24 (NRSV) – Israel Exalted at Last

Thus says the Lord God:
I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.
I will break off a tender one
from the topmost of its young twigs;
I myself will plant it
on a high and lofty mountain.
On the mountain height of Israel
I will plant it,
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.
Under it every kind of bird will live;
in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.
All the trees of the field shall know

that I am the Lord.
I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;
I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.
I the Lord have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

Psalm 92 (NRSV) – Thanksgiving for Vindication

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,
to the music of the lute and the harp,
to the melody of the lyre.
For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.
How great are your works, O Lord!
Your thoughts are very deep!
The dullard cannot know,
the stupid cannot understand this:
though the wicked sprout like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they are doomed to destruction for ever,
but you, O Lord, are on high for ever.
For your enemies, O Lord,
for your enemies shall perish;
all evildoers shall be scattered.
But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;
you have poured over me fresh oil.
My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies;
my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.
The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house of the Lord;
they flourish in the courts of our God.
In old age they still produce fruit;
they are always green and full of sap,
showing that the Lord is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness

God of all,
you do not force growth but nurture it.
Forgive us when we want too much too soon.
You do not start big but start small.
Forgive us when we want too much too soon.
You do not sow greedily but graciously.
Forgive us when we want too much too soon.
You do not hurry the harvest but hallow it.
Forgive us when we want too much too soon.
Forgive us, and accept the work of our hands,
in Jesus' name.

Living God,
from a mustard seed to a tree, from I to we,
in you we grow. **Amen**
In the mystery of the unseen, from brown field to green,
in you we grow. **Amen**
By faith and not by sight, by day and by night,
in you we grow. **Amen**
Forgiven and freed, through word and deed,
in you we grow. **Amen**
As we sow and reap, as we laugh and weep,
in you we grow. **Amen**
May your kingdom come, Father, Spirit, Son,
as in you we grow. **Amen**

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving

God of grace and growth,
you have called us to plant the seeds of your kingdom
in the fields of your world,
and to trust you for their developing and flourishing –
and so we praise you.
For the abundance of your creativity:
we praise you.
For the transforming nature of your Spirit:
we praise you.
For the power of small beginnings:
we praise you.
For the mystery of hidden growth:
we praise you.
And for the harvest we are invited to delight in:
we praise you.
In Jesus' name. Amen

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (NRSV)

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Mark 4:26-34 (NRSV) – the Parable of the Growing Seed and the Parable of the Mustard Seed

Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.' With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Bible notes (Roots 2021)

Jesus uses images of plants and trees in his parables. This is surely much more significant than simply borrowing from the scenery around him. He could have talked about carpentry and building, for instance, and yet he talks about plants and growth.

The abiding image for the kingdom of God is growth, not construction. Growth is silent. It continues day and night. There is still a mystery and wonder around how a seed becomes a mature plant, even now that we understand DNA and photosynthesis. It is still astonishing that new life germinates, and we are still reliant on this natural process for our staple foods. All our skill at farming and food production is predicated on this natural force.

These two parables suggest the kingdom of God also has this tremendous growing energy, similar to the emerging life of a seed. We seem to have little to contribute to the process, beyond initially sowing the seed and perhaps taking care of the plant. The earth and the seed together produce the mature plants, and this happens whether the grower is awake or asleep. The mustard seed grows to become a huge shrub, with room for the birds in its shade (reminiscent of the tree in Ezekiel 17.23). This is what the kingdom of God is like, growing mysteriously and wonderfully.

This is not the only image of the kingdom of God in the parables of Jesus: there are also family relationships, work colleagues, things that happen at wedding feasts and things that are lost, among others. But this cluster of parables reminds us of the mysterious energy secretly at work in the world – not only the Church – to produce the growth of God's kingdom.

Prayers of intercession

Eternal, ever-present God, visible and yet invisible,
we bring our prayers for those we know
and those unknown to us.

We seek to journey with you and with them,
to support and uphold them with prayer and love.

For those who journey with illness and pain,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those searching for meaning and purpose,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those wanting to belong and yet seemingly
always on the edge,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who lack confidence in themselves,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who have no faith, no vision for an eternal future,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who live with lies, secrets and untruths,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who live without the very basic foundations of life:
without food and water and homes,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

By praying for these, we know that we must walk and work
hand in hand with you, to relieve their suffering and pain.

We trust our prayers, our loving and our living, to your
almighty and eternal presence. Amen

Collect for Trinity 2 (MWB)

Almighty God,
without you we are not able to please you.
Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Sending our prayer

Go in peace to love and serve God's world.
It is beautiful and you are part of it.
It is our sacred commission to help God love it. Amen

Prayers © Roots 2021 (unless otherwise stated)

Bible readings for this week

Monday 14 June

Psalm 53
1 Samuel 13:23-14:23
Galatians 6:11-18

Tuesday 15 June

Psalm 53
1 Samuel 15:10-23
Revelation 21:22-22:5

Wednesday 16 June

Psalm 53
1 Samuel 15:24-31
Luke 6:43-45

Thursday 17 June

Psalm 9:9-20
1 Samuel 16:14-23
Acts 20:1-16

Friday 18 June

Psalm 9:9-20
1 Samuel 17:55-18:5
Acts 21:1-16

Saturday 19 June

Psalm 9:9-20
1 Samuel 18:1-4
Luke 21:25-28