



Seward United Methodist Church

9:30 a.m.

April 30, 2023

Gathering Music/Prelude

Sarah Rodocker

Welcome and Announcements

Passing the Peace

Call to Worship

L: Come, listen, hear the stories that shape our faith.

P: We will be attentive and listen with our hearts and minds.

L: These are the stories Jesus told, the parables that sneak up on us with layers of meaning and mystery and challenge.

P: We will seek beyond easy answers for the deeper truths the parables teach.

Hymn

Cry of My Heart

TFWS 2165

Refrain

It is the cry of my heart to follow you.

It is the cry of my heart to be close to you.

It is the cry of my heart to follow

All the days of my life.

1. Teach me your holy ways, O Lord,
so I can walk in your truth.

Teach me your holy ways, O Lord,
and make me wholly devoted to you.

2. Open my eyes so I can see
the wonderful things that you do.

Open my heart up more and more,
and make me wholly devoted to you.

Common Prayer (in unison)

God of Word and Breath and Life, thank you for the gift of stories that teach us who you are and who you call us to be. Remind us that the best stories are worth repeating time and again and again. Open up to us the parable we hear today. Allow it to teach us anew and strengthen our faith. In the name of Jesus, who first shared the parables. AMEN.

Children's Time

Pastor Jo Ellen Axthelm

Scripture Lesson: Mark 4:2-9

² Jesus began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³ "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸ Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." ⁹ And he said, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!"

Hymn

A Farmer Sowed His Precious Seed

Verse 1

A farmer sowed his precious seed
Upon the path one day
But when the birds came down for food
They snatched it all away
Creator may your word be sown
Deep down within my heart
So when temptation comes my way
It never shall depart

Verse 3

And other seedlings landed where
Thick brambles sharp with thorn
Sprang up extending far and wide
And choked the tender corn
Creator may your Word of power
Grow strong within my heart
So when the world's distractions come
It never shall depart

Verse 2

And some he scattered came to rest
On rocky stony ground
But when the sunshine scorched the plants
Not one green shoot was found
Creator may your Word of life
Take root within my heart
So when perplexing trials come
It never shall depart

Verse 4

But after all the farmer's toil
A crop was brought to birth
As healthy plants grew up from seeds
That fell on fertile earth
Creator, God of harvest come
Your Spirit's grace impart
And may your word for evermore
Be fruitful in my heart

CCLI Song # 5939635

Emma Turl

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Sermon

“Extravagant Sower”

Rev. Dr. Mary Kay Totty

Prayers of the People

Prayer Hymn

Lord, Be Glorified

TFWS 2150

¹In our lives, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.
In our lives, Lord, be glorified today.

²In our homes ...

³In your church ...

⁴In your word ...

Sharing Joys and Concerns
Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

Thank you, God, for the greatest of all gifts, the saving action of Jesus Christ in human history. Your gift inspires our generous response. We bring our offerings and renewed commitment. Help us to be faithful disciples. Amen.

(from: "Fresh Winds of the Spirit" by Lavon Bayler, p. 52)

Hymn**I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light****UMH 206**

¹ I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus. (R)

² I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,
And show me the way to the Father. (R)

Refrain

In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

³ I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
We shall know the joy of Jesus. (R)

Benediction**Postlude****Sarah Rodocker**