

## Seeds of Faith

Congregational responses are in **bold**.

Opening prayer:

We come together this morning to look at our lives and where God has brought us as well as to look ahead to what God can do with us and through us over time.

We are like seeds to be planted. God has been working in our lives. This is evident in the fact that we are here. Just as a seed shows that there were parent plants, our presence here shows that God has been at work in our lives. The seed also shows amazing potential. Remember that an oak tree grows from just a small acorn.

Say: please join me in prayer:

**When we look at a seed, we see the shadow of the plant that it will become. God invites us to be a part of his plan to change the world. He calls us to take part in sharing His love with those around us. He has great things ready for us and great plans to glorify His name as we continue to learn and grow. Just like the seed, when we look closely, we can see the shadow of the people we will become. Amen.**

Say alone:

Today we will be reminded that our potential will remain simply potential unless we make the choice to follow God. We know that choosing God's path will not be easy, but it will be worth it in the end.

Call to worship: Say- please join me in the call to worship:

**Let us not be too quick to judge between wheat and weed.**

**Let us not be too concerned about who is good and who is bad.**

**Let us not close our doors or our hearts based on outward appearance.**

**Let us see others through God's eyes, and be quick to welcome, care, comfort, and forgive.**

Call to Confession:

Sometimes we turn our backs on God and ignore the path God has set for us. Other times, we sin against God, knowing that what we are doing is wrong. In these times especially, we must come to God in repentance and ask for forgiveness.

Prayer of Confession: Say- please join me in the prayer of confession:

**Lord, forgive us when we doubt your mercy and your love. We are so caught up in getting everything that we want; and we want it all right now. We have trouble waiting and remembering that it is in the waiting that we might hear your voice. It is difficult for us to**

**believe that we can be fruitful, good soil for your words and work. We find excuses not to be attentive to you, but to focus instead on our own desires. Slow us down, Lord. Remind us again of your mercy and your love; for we offer this in Jesus' name- Amen.**

Say alone:

God hears our cries and heals our wounded hearts. God is preparing us for good things to come. We place our trust in God who has always loved us and will always love us. Amen.

Praise the Lord!

**The Lord be praised!**

**Song Response:**

**Glory be to the Father; and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be; world without end, Amen. Amen.**

Scripture reading:

Reader one: The Parable of the Weeds

<sup>24</sup>Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup>But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup>When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

<sup>27</sup>"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

<sup>28</sup>"An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

<sup>29</sup>"No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup>Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Reader two:

<sup>36</sup>Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

<sup>37</sup>He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.<sup>38</sup>The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

<sup>40</sup>"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.<sup>42</sup>They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Anthem: All Things Bright and Beautiful (sung by the youth choir)

Scripture reading continued:

Reader one: The Parable of the Sower

**13** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.<sup>2</sup>Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. <sup>3</sup>Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup>As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup>Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup>Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup>Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <sup>9</sup>Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Reader two:

<sup>18</sup>"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. <sup>20</sup>The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. <sup>21</sup>But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes

because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>22</sup>The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>23</sup>But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

#### Bringing of the Gifts

As followers of Christ, we are to practice Jesus’ ways of obedience and sacrifice. He gave every part of himself to God’s will and consequently became a blessing for all the world. Our tithes and offerings are signs of our own obedience and sacrifice. May they be used this day to be a blessing to the world in Christ’s name.

Prayer of Dedication: Say- please join me in the prayer of dedication:

**Thank you for the opportunity to live as an example, offering to others what you have given us. Bless us, dear Lord, and accept these tithes and offerings as our praise to the Savior, the risen and glorified Jesus. Amen.**

*Guided Prayer: have ushers hand out seeds either before the service begins or during the offering. Seeds need to be big enough to hold and look at. We used pumpkin seeds.*

Look at the seed that you hold in your hand (pause)

Think about the plant that it came from, and imagine the plant that it will become (pause)

Now, think about your own life (pause)

Spend some time thinking about both the good and the bad things (pause)

Did you fulfill all that God planned for you? (pause)

Look at the seed in your hand and think about its potential. Think about what it can become and imagine that there are glowing words written from the inside that you can read. These words are the plan that God has for you.

Take your time and listen for the words that God is speaking to your heart. (long pause)

God is calling you to make a difference in the world (pause)

Think about your potential and what you can accomplish with God’s help. (long pause)

Some of God’s plans may appear to conflict with your own. If so, acknowledge those now, don’t try to hide them. (pause)

Which would you prefer, a life that is your way...or God's way? (pause)

Be honest with yourself, and ask God to give you a heart for His way (pause)

Hold out your hand and offer your seed to God. Ask God to use you and to fulfill His plan in your life. (pause)

Now, close your hand and hold your seed close to you. (pause)

Say a short prayer of thanks to God for choosing you. Thank God for inviting you on life's grand adventure. (pause)

Please join me in a spirit of prayer:

Creator God, you have called us on a grand adventure. You have called us to be a part of your plan for changing the world. Help us to let go of our lies and let you have control. Help us to seek out your path and follow your design for our lives. Let us continue to grow as you work in our hearts. Let all that we do be worship to you. Amen.

Hymn: Hymn of Promise

Message: Seeds of Faith

Reading:

Adult Leader: There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

Youth: A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

Adult Leader: A time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

Youth: A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,

Adult Leader: A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

Youth: A time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,

Adult Leader: A time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.

Youth: A time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Adult Leader: This is your time.

Youth: This year, we have experienced many things.

Adult Leader: Your days have been full of triumphs and defeats; laughter and heartache.

Youth: We have walked close to God in worship and have walked through long dry days searching for His face.

Adult leader: You have reached out to new people and taken the love of Christ to new places.

Youth: We have ignored hurting people around us and hoarded God's love for ourselves.

Adult leader: But no matter what you have done in the past, you are not the same people who began this process.

Youth: We have learned new truth and have seen new revelations.

Adult leader: You have grown, and you have changed.

Youth: But we are not at the end of our journey yet, in fact this is only the beginning.

Adult leader: God is calling you to join on a spiritual quest to change the world and to jump into a faithful life of adventure.

Youth: so, we stand here today, half way through this program year with new decisions, new joys, new pains, new experiences, new expectations and a new life stretched out before us.

Adult leader: You are filled with such potential, like a seed, you may not seem like much now, but God has a plan for you to grow.

Youth: To become more than we have ever dreamed.

Adult leader: So, the question is this:

Will you continue to walk the path that God has placed before you?

Will you continue to take up this quest to take God's truth to the ends of the earth?

The question is this:

Will you continue to take up this quest to take God's love to the people around us?

Youth: We are filled with such potential

We refuse to remain a seed

We choose God.

Hymn: God of Creation, All Powerful

*Seed Object Lesson: You will need a reader and a "gardener". Have a table set up with the following: a pot with dirt and a weed or two in it, gardening gloves, small hand shovel, seeds, small watering can (with water), table lamp that will bend over the pot.*

Reader: If you were going to plant this seed in this pot, you probably wouldn't leave this thing like it is. You would take the time to remove the weeds and other things that might hinder the growth of your seed.

Gardener will put on the gardening gloves and pull out the weeds.

Gardener will take a small hand shovel and bury a seed in the soil.

Reader: After you plant the seed you wouldn't just leave it there or it would never grow. You would add water and sunlight to the pot so that your seed could grow.

Gardener will kneel behind the table or simply fold hands in prayer.

Reader: For us to be able to reach our full potential, we need to do some preparation of the environment as well. Some of us may need to weed our lives. Some of us have some relationships that aren't the best for our lives. Some of us are making some choices about what we watch and listen to that we need to remove from our lives. Some of us need to remove the fear that we have of talking to people about God. Some of us need to remove that hidden guilt that we have been holding onto for so long. Whatever it is, make a commitment right now to remove that weed from your life.

We also need to add some things to the soil.

Gardener will water the soil.

Reader: We can water our soil by spending time with God. Spend time in conversation with God through prayer. Find ways to worship him privately and with other people. Get involved in the things that God cares about like helping others. Choose right now to spend more time with God.

Finally, understand that only God can make our lives grow. We can do everything right but if we try to do them without God, we will not grow. God is the sunlight we need. He is the life that we are desperate for. Never forget to turn to Him daily. Let us begin right now to allow ourselves to grow into what God plans for us to be.

Gardener will turn on the light and both reader and the gardener should quietly return to their seats.

Benediction.

