



Scattered Seeds

Building a Strong Foundation

**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 12, 2026**

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Liturgist Pre-service: Please check with Pastor Barb with any questions regarding the readings. Liturgist's words are in Blue. Pastor Barb's are in Red. Instructions are in Green.

Sunday 10:00 am — Walk down the aisle on Pastor Barb's right. Stop before the step for a prayer, then proceed on the floor around to the hand railing to climb to your seat. The Call to Worship is after the Meditation. You are welcome to use your bulletin or the screens for the hymns.

Singing Prelude *Surely the Presence* Wolfe

**Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel the mighty power and the grace.
I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;
surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.**

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ. Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space. I am Pastor Barb, and Ginnie Behan will be our liturgist today. Sara Stafford is our Song Leader. Many thanks to all of our staff and volunteers for all that they do so that we can come together to worship God.

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given by Victoria Protze, "In Loving Memory of my son John Ciano."

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let

your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to share, please make sure that you let the office know, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have noted your presence either at our welcome table or through the QR codes found in the pews. We are excited to get to know you. We also have an exciting gift for you.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,
as Venice United Church of Christ,
we empower and invite everyone
to join us in this divine place
that we share on line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,
no matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
and no one is turned away.

Following worship, everyone is invited to stay for coffee and fellowship across the lane in Naar Hall. Thank you to Wendy Seeley, who is our host this week.

On Monday, SpiritFed will be meeting on Zoom to pray, to share gratitude, and to study and reflect on the scriptures from today

and for next week. The link is in the Connect, or you can contact the office if the Connect's link is not working for you and you want to receive it. Our regularly scheduled summer activities, such as the Wednesday Bible Study and Men's Friday Panera breakfast, are always welcoming new participants.

There are many ways to get involved here at Venice UCC, whether through activities, volunteering for special projects or helping with our mission projects, or serving on a team or committee. Please check out the information table to explore new ways to become connected to the ministries of our church.

Throughout July, we are exploring themes of grace, forgiveness, and forbearance through the text of Rev. Nadia-Bolz-Weber's Book, *Accidental Saints*. Rev. Nadia, an ordained Lutheran Pastor, current theologian in residence for Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church, and regular speaker in the United Church of Christ, grew up in a conservative Christian environment, stepped away from church, and struggled with addiction in her younger years before her recovery led her to her current ministry. In 2008 she founded the House for all Sinners and Saints in Colorado, which was designed to be an anti-excellence, pro-participation community for anyone who felt alienated from traditional church structures. *Accidental Saints* takes a look at some of her experiences at House for all Sinners and Saints, and reminds us that God's grace often meets us in imperfect people and imperfect communities.

Today Jesus tells of a sower who scatters seed everywhere, while Bolz-Weber reminds us that every community eventually disappoints us. Together they invite us to see that forgiveness is not simply something we offer after faith has grown—it is one of the ways God prepares our hearts to bear fruit.

For we come to worship an extravagantly generous, steadfastly loving God. May our worship align us again with God's holy purpose — to love one another as Christ loves us.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

We Approach God's Presence

Bringing in the Light of Christ *You Are the Seed*

Gabaraín

Responsive Call to Worship *Go to the Pulpit.*

Ginnie Behan

Good morning. Please join me in the responsive Call to Worship.

One day Jesus sat beside the sea, and the crowds gathered to listen.

He spoke of seeds scattered with generous hands—

not because every piece of ground was ready,

But because God's love refuses to give up.

Some hearts are weary.

Some hearts are wounded.

Some are learning, little by little, to forgive.

Some are discovering that forgiveness is itself good soil.

Come, all who long to grow.

Come, all who have stumbled and begun again.

For God's grace is scattered freely among us,

and Christ is still making all things new.

Please rise in body or in spirit to sing, "You are Salt for the Earth, O People." The words are on the screens, and the music is in the bulletin.

Return to chair and stand for the Hymn.

***Hymn**

You Are Salt for the Earth, O People

Haugen

1. You are salt for the earth, O people:
salt for the reign of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people:
life in the city of God!

Bring forth the reign of mercy,
bring forth the reign of peace;
bring forth the reign of justice,
bring forth the City of God!

3. You are a seed of the Word, O people:
bring forth the reign of God!

Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice,
grown in the City of God!

Bring forth the reign of mercy,
bring forth the reign of peace;
bring forth the reign of justice,
bring forth the City of God!

2. You are a light on the hill, O people:
light for the City of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people:
shine for the City of God!

Bring forth the reign of mercy,
bring forth the reign of peace;
bring forth the reign of justice,
bring forth the City of God!

4. We are a blessed and a pilgrim people:
Bound for the reign of God!

Love our journey and love our homeland:
Love is the City of God!

Bring forth the reign of mercy,
bring forth the reign of peace;
bring forth the reign of justice,
bring forth the City of God!

You Are Salt for the Earth, O People

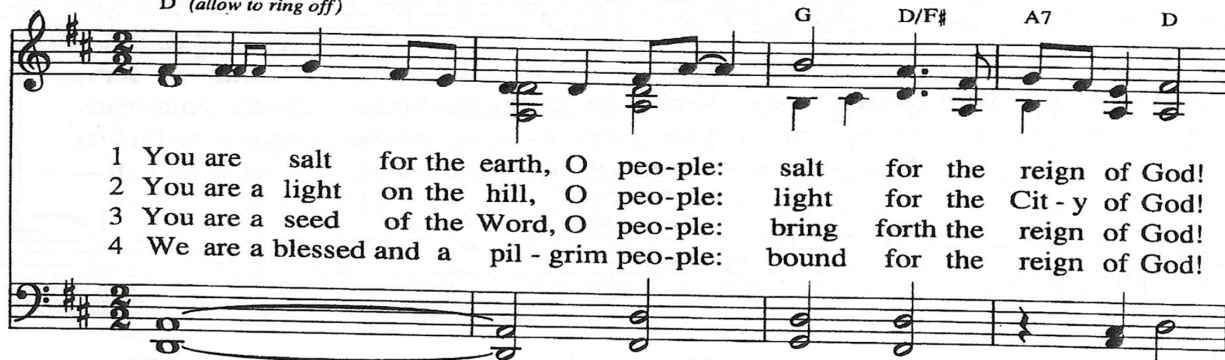
181

Paraphr. by Marty Haugen, 1986; alt.

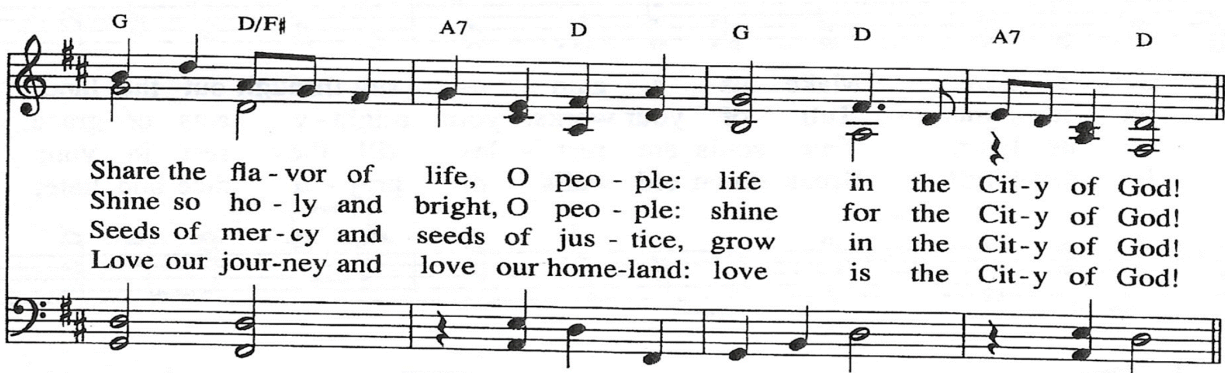
Matt. 5:13-15

Unison

D (allow to ring off)

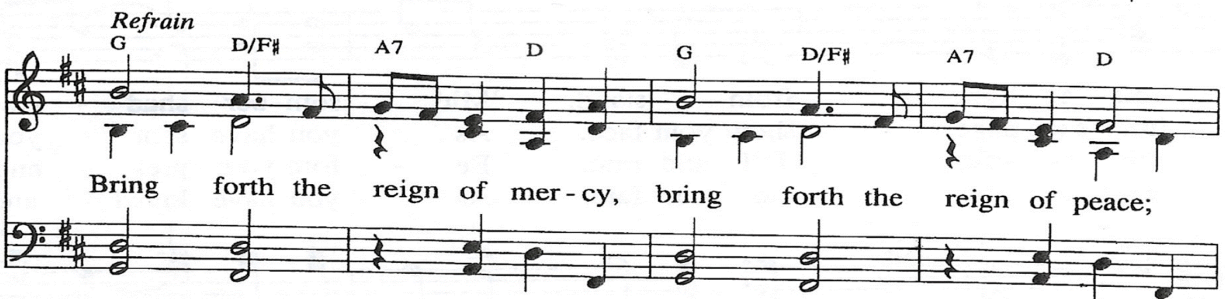


1 You are salt for the earth, O peo-ple: salt for the reign of God!
 2 You are a light on the hill, O peo-ple: light for the Cit-y of God!
 3 You are a seed of the Word, O peo-ple: bring forth the reign of God!
 4 We are a blessed and a pil-grim peo-ple: bound for the reign of God!

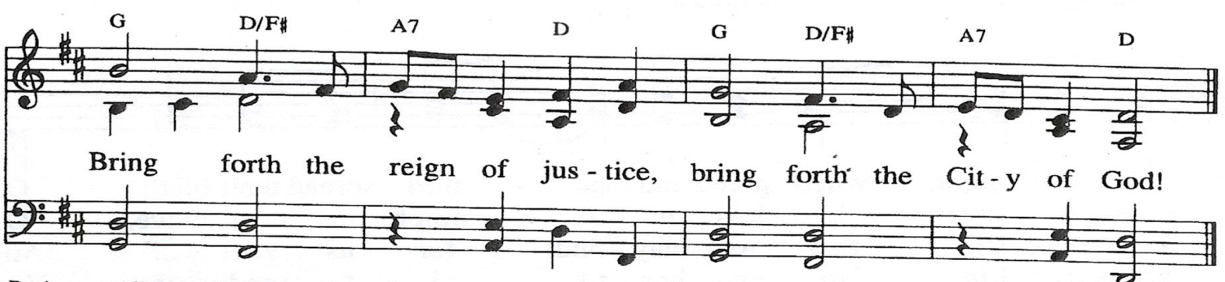


Share the fla- vor of life, O peo- ple: life in the Cit-y of God!
 Shine so ho- ly and bright, O peo- ple: shine for the Cit-y of God!
 Seeds of mer- cy and seeds of jus- tice, grow in the Cit-y of God!
 Love our jour-ney and love our home-land: love is the Cit-y of God!

Refrain



Bring forth the reign of mer- cy, bring forth the reign of peace;



Bring forth the reign of jus- tice, bring forth the Cit-y of God!

During a residency at Holden Village, a retreat center in the state of Washington, Marty Haugen wrote this hymn to be used as a "processing song" for outdoor worship. The lectionary readings focusing on Jesus' teaching about the "reign of God" provided the basis for the text.

Tune: BRING FORTH Irr. with refrain
 Marty Haugen, 1986

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***Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Return to the pulpit at end of song.

May God hear our hearts as we responsively pray for transformation:

Generous God,

You scatter grace more freely than we deserve
and love more faithfully than we can imagine.

Still,

We confess that our hearts are not always ready to receive your gifts.

Sometimes hurt hardens us.

Sometimes disappointment leaves us shallow.

Sometimes resentment grows quietly until it crowds out compassion.

Rather than practicing forgiveness,

we rehearse old wounds,

hold tightly to offenses,

and protect ourselves from one another.

So loosen the soil of our hearts.

Give us courage to forgive as we have been forgiven,

not because forgiveness is easy,

but because your mercy continues

to make new life possible.

Plant your Word deeply within us,

that patience, kindness, reconciliation, and hope

may bear fruit through us.

In Christ we pray. Amen.

***Words of Grace**

Hear the Good News:

God never waits for perfect soil before sowing grace.

Again and again, God plants mercy within us,

trusting that love can soften even the hardest places.

In Jesus Christ,

We are forgiven, renewed, and invited to begin again.

Thanks be to God. Amen

Step back from the mic. to sing:

***Response**

Bless This Seed vs. 1,2

Bible

**Bless this seed as we sow.
O, God, only You can make it grow.**

**Bless this seed, sown in faith.
God, complete Your work as we obey.**

Return to the mic. as the chorus ends.

We Encounter God in the Word

Contemplative Reading *Accidental Saints*¹ Nadia Bolz-Weber

Please be seated for our contemplative reading.

As a preacher to those who felt abandoned by God and betrayed by church, I invite you to hear God speak through Rev. Nadia's words about forgiveness and sin from her book, *Accidental Saints*:

“Forgiveness of sins is a tricky business. In my childhood I was taught that all the not-perfect things we do or say or think are all tallied up on some big spiritual dry-erase board in heaven. This is... what God mostly busies himself with. A sin is a sin is a sin, I was told. So red marks both for someone who murders and for someone who thinks to herself that her teacher is a real... [you-know-what]. I was told that when Jesus came and died on the cross he wiped all those red marks away, but before Jesus, we had to get priests to offer sacrifices on our behalf in order for the marks to go away.

...By sacrificing Jesus, God put the eraser in our hands, so that now, if we confess our sins and feel terrible for every bad deed, word, or thought and if we promise not to do, say, or think those things again, then the marks are erased. And when it comes down to it, God is pleased with us only when we have a clean board. ... So, you know...get busy.

This view of sin and punishment is perhaps not as commonly held now as it was.... Sure, some still believe that in heaven there is a list of good behaviors and bad behaviors and therefore to know that God forgives your sin is to know that God has erased the red marks against you and therefore is no longer mad, which means he won't punish you.

But honestly, I'm much more tortured by my secrets, which eat away at me, than I am concerned about God being mad at me. I'm more haunted by how what I've said and the things I've done have caused harm to myself and others than I am worried that God will punish me for

¹ Nadia Bolz-Weber. *Accidental Saints: Finding God in all the Wrong People*. Convergent Books: New York, 2015. 129-131.

being bad. Because in the end, we aren't punished for our sins as much as we are punished by our sins.

And sin is just the state of human brokenness in which what we say and do causes these sometimes tiny and sometimes monstrous fractures in our earth, in ourselves, in those we love, and sometimes even in our own bodies. ...And it's not something we can avoid entirely."

God is Still Speaking. **Thanks be to God!**

*Please make your way to the handrail and take a seat.
Thank you for leading this portion of the service.*

Anthem	<i>A Sower Came from Ancient Hills</i>	Stuempfle/Horman
	Sara Stafford, soloist	

1-9 That same day, Jesus left the house and went to sit by the sea. Large crowds gathered around Him, and He got into a boat on the sea and sat there. The crowd stood on the shore waiting for His teaching.

And so Jesus began to teach. On this day, He spoke in parables. Here is His first parable:

Jesus: Once there was a sower who scattered seeds. One day he walked in a field scattering seeds as he went. Some seeds fell beside a road, and a flock of birds came and ate all those seeds. So the sower scattered seeds in a field, one with shallow soil and strewn with rocks. But the seeds grew quickly amid all the rocks, without rooting themselves in the shallow soil. Their roots got tangled up in all the stones. The sun scorched these seeds, and they died. And so the sower scattered seeds near a path, this one covered with thorny vines. The seeds fared no better there—the thorns choked them, and they died. And so finally the sower scattered his seeds in a patch of good earth. At home in the good earth, the seeds grew and grew. Eventually, the seeds bore fruit, and the fruit grew ripe and was harvested. The harvest was immense—30, 60, 100 times what was sown.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“Scattered Seeds”

Pastor Barb

Let us pray:

For the words of challenge,
for the words of blessing,
for the spirit of wisdom moving in our midst,
we give you honor and thanks and praise. Amen

...

We Respond to God's Grace

Congregational Prayers

Joys

The migrating birds. What a wonderful world with God in it. English butter toffee, sisters, our volunteers, healthy family, being here, for moms, this church, phone calls with loved ones, friends, lovely holidays, beautiful weather, getting up each morning, grateful to learn about life from my grandma, fellowship, thankful that the Lord listens to prayers whatever they might be, waking up to spouses and loved ones, for heartfelt messages of joy, belief in God, for everyone gathered in our sacred space this morning

Music, kindness, our volunteers who do so much, my healthy family, to be alive, those who light up our lives, love, my belief in God, wonderful friends, visiting family far away and the joy of coming home, grateful for learning to live a life of joy, coffee and baked goods, playing golf, a place to live, good health, everyone who is here today, the awe of each new day.

Sunshine, rain, quiet still mornings, family, healthy family, wonderful friends, church friends, fog turned to sunshine, friends and neighbors who are like family, sisters, being able to come to church, my dog, being alive, beautiful weather, lovely holiday, getting up in the morning, health, spouse, place to live, the love between spouses and soulmates, grapes and fellowship, belief in God, being able to express ourselves to God, a van that works, love, everything, the beauty of the palms, sunrise, banyan trees, diversity of the congregation, God's new morning painting, the awe of the moon shining through the clouds and pointing to the star, music, kindness, learning to walk backwards, sunshine through the window and a peaceful household

Each beautiful new day, slow mornings, gorgeous sunsets, that we are able to celebrate our joys — for celebrating joy reminds us that we share the same source of our joy, the depth of human creativity and spirit, skilled medical professionals, friendship, safe travels, gathering together to study God's word, rebirth and recreation in communities that empower and hold us as we ask tough questions of God and each other, those who pitch in and help out, birthdays, anniversaries, milestones...

When we pray for our loved ones, we have a duty of care to not spread their business without explicit permission. Instead, as we pray, we hold our loved ones close to our heart and lift them up to God, trusting that the Spirit intercedes in all of our prayers, especially those too deep for words.

Intercessions:

For the family and friends of Dr. Sam

Rob, Maria, Elvi, Maria		Sam
Ruth	Vicki	Rani
Jimmy	Christine	Cerenity
Mark	Helen	Pam
Rev. Ryan's family	Jack	Rick
Kip	Bashay	Ami
Clark	Barbara	
Sandy Protz		
Peter		

These names were included last week. I was unsure if they needed to continue to be included:

Lisa
Carolyn
Will

Family and friend of Pat
Family and friend of Lowell
John
Mary
Buddy
Dennis
Pat
Harold
Carolyn

We pray for those people who have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families, ... pets that need homes

Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that choose violence and war instead of diplomacy; all essential workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted by recent hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, and flooding;
and

The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra Leone, Immokalee Farm Workers, black and brown fathers and their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's work in dangerous places.

(Second Sunday: sins)

Silent Prayer

Prayers of the People and our Lord's Prayer

Generous and forgiving God,

You scatter your love with astonishing abundance, never waiting for perfect people or perfect circumstances before offering your grace. Continue to soften the places within us that have grown hard through disappointment, fear, or old wounds. Teach us to receive your mercy with open hearts and to trust that you are always growing something new within us.

As we learn to practice forgiveness, help us remember that it is not forgetting what has happened nor pretending that pain is insignificant. Rather, it is choosing, again and again, to make room for your healing work. Plant within us the patience to persevere, the wisdom to understand one another more deeply, and the compassion to extend the same grace that Christ continually offers to us.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy. We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as together we pray as you have taught us:

**Our Father [Creator]* who is in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our sins**

as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For Yours is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory.
Forever.

Amen.

** Please use what is the most real expression for you.*

Response

Bless This Seed v. 3

Bible

**Grow this seed day by day.
Bless its fruit in human lives, we pray.**

We Share God's Love

Invitation to Generosity

Jesus describes a sower who scatters seed generously, without first deciding which ground is worthy. In much the same way, this congregation shares God's love with generous hearts, trusting that every act of kindness, every ministry, and every gift has the possibility of taking root in someone's life.

As we offer our gifts today, may we do so with gratitude, trusting God to bring growth in ways we cannot yet see.

(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. For those of us online, please follow the QR code.)

***Song of Gratitude**

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

Generous God,

Bless these gifts and those who offer them.

Scatter them wherever hope is needed,

where forgiveness is waiting to be practiced,

and where lives are ready to be renewed.

**May the seeds we plant together bear fruit for your kingdom,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

We Go to Carry the Light

***Hymn**

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Westendorf

**Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.**

**The service is ended, O now be extended
the fruits of our worship in all who believe.**

**The seed of the teaching, receptive hearts reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.**

**God's grace did invite us, and love shall unite us
to work for God's realm and to answer the call.**

**With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,
the tasks of our everyday life we will face.**

**Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.**

**With your grace you feed us, with your light now lead us,
unite us as one in this life that we share.**

**Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and that name which we bear.**

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Omer Westendorf, 1964

Unison

The musical score is written for a unison voice part. It consists of eight systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line, with some words hyphenated across lines. The piano accompaniment is written in a simple, supportive style with chords and moving lines.

1 Sent forth by God's bless-ing, our true faith con - fess - ing, the
2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the

peo - ple of our God from this dwell-ing take leave. The ser - vice is
tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er

end - ed, O now be ex - tend - ed the fruits of our wor - ship in
shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil - dren of

all who be - lieve. The seed of the teach - ing, re -
each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with

cep - tive hearts reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for
your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this

God and for all. God's grace did in - vite us, and love shall u -
life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -

nite us to work for God's realm and to an - swer the call.
giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.

***Blessing and Benediction**

Go now as people who have received God's generous grace.

Scatter kindness freely.

Practice forgiveness patiently.

Trust that God is already at work in places where you cannot yet see growth.

And may the God who plants hope,
the Christ who nurtures faith,
and the Holy Spirit who brings every good seed to fruition,
go with you today and always.

Amen.

***Sending Blessing**

Bless This Seed v. 4

Bible

You create. You command.

Bless this seed.

We leave it in Your hands.

***Postlude**

Shout to the Lord

Zschech

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the
Light of Christ is carried into the world.
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

Supporting Our Service Today

Liturgist: Ginnie Behan

Welcome Table: Barbara Talmage

Greeters: Barbara and George
Allaire

Acolyte: Bella Clapham

Head Usher: Gary Leidheiser

Usher Team: Terry Calderone,
George Calderone, Sharon
Leidheiser

Technology Team

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely,
Maria Groody, David Jack,
Linda Newton, Wally Davis,
Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated
by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are given
"In Loving Memory of my son
John Ciano" by Victoria Protze

The **Church Sign** was changed by
Faye Newton & Lisa Sclafani

Sunday Librarian:

Marcia Murphy



Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Barbara Dickason, BCC

Staff

Gary Leidheiser: *Custodian*

Marguerite Long:

Administrative Specialist

Natashia Laughnan:

Social Media and

Communications Specialist

Barbara Quinn: *Music Director*

Lynda Weston: *Bella Handbell
Director*

This Week at a Glance

Monday, July 13

SpiritFed at noon

Pack a lunch, come-as-you-are and join us **on ZOOM** for prayer, study and connecting with each other.

Click on the link below to join.

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83576594637?
pwd=U2024sKmOPiy3CyMqV4Oa
rYUtofaom.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83576594637?pwd=U2024sKmOPiy3CyMqV4OaYUtofaom.1)

Meeting ID: 835 7659 4637
Passcode: 913882

Tuesday, July 14

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

2:00 PM Care Task Team

Wednesday, July 15

9:00 AM - Noon Library Hours

10:00 AM Bible Study — CR

11:00 AM Republicans — NH

Thursday, July 16

1:00 PM Stewardship — CR

4:00 PM Baby Basics— NH

Friday, July 17

8:30 AM Men's Coffee—Panera

Saturday, July 18

10:30 AM VADC— NH

Sunday, June 19

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

9:00-9:45 AM Library Hour

10:00 AM Worship

Fellowship Time Follows - NH

11:00-11:15 AM Library Time

Coming Events

The church office is open
M-Th, 9-1.

Would you like to donate to VUCC online?

Use this link:

<https://veniceucc.org/give>

Or...Use your Smart Phone to scan the QR code: and it will take you directly to our donations page. It is really easy!

