

**“Teaching of the Week”**  
**Preview for Service of Word and Sacrament, July 12, 2026**  
**The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A), Liturgical Color: Green**  
**Westminster Presbyterian Church, Tiburon, California**

Visit the church website: [www.wpctiburon.org](http://www.wpctiburon.org), 415-383-5272  
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*This weekly study guide seeks to help members, friends, and visitors prepare for the upcoming Sunday service and teaching.*

### **Opening Blessing**

Grace is being scattered amongst us today. Joy is being scattered amongst us today. Love, peace, kindness, and so much more is being scattered amongst us today. Let these things take root here as we continue in song.

### **Call to Worship**

One: By God's grace, seeds of faith are scattered without end.

**Many: Scatter them amongst us, O Lord.**

One: Some seed falls on hard ground, some on rocks, some among thorns—

**Many: But some falls on good soil, and grows.**

One: By opening our hearts, we till the soil.

**Many: We come, ground ready for planting.**

### **Community Prayer**

God of the open field, your grace falls like rain. Forgive us when we let our hearts go hard or bring about hardness in others. How can we break up the hardness of our hearts with compassionate care? Help us to have the patience to wait for the beautiful things you're growing in us. Amen

**Sermon Focus and Title** “Wisdom for Ordinary Times: That’s Why It Happens” Jeff Shankle  
Middle school may be one of the hardest seasons of life for some people. For me though, middle schoolers are amazing. Who knows what you're going to get from person to person. Some 6th graders are getting into the upper reaches of 5 feet in height already (not that I know any) while some 8th graders are stuck in the 4 foot range still. Yet, some of those 4 footers might have better self-control, and able to process their education and social lives with ease. Others are still laughing with the innocence of 1<sup>st</sup> grade humor and struggle to make sense of the increasing sarcasm of their peers.

Do you remember those days? Some kids grew slowly and some had beards already.

Why is that? Why are some quick to grow and some are not? Why are some quick to mature and some are not? I bet that you know about at least some of the reasons for either.

The same thing could be said about entrepreneurship and why certain businesses thrive and others struggle. We could say the same thing about relationships, some struggle and some thrive. The same could be said about our professional lives, our gardens, our sports teams... really anything!

That's what makes Jesus' parable about the seeds so powerful. It clarifies and helps us make sense of the randomness of it all. But when we dig a little deeper (pun intended) we can find how to take agency of these outcomes.

We know our God desires goodness and holiness in all things. If only we can pick up our trowel or spade and till the soil.

## Scriptures

### Psalm 65:9-13

<sup>9</sup>You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. <sup>10</sup>You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. <sup>11</sup>You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. <sup>12</sup>The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, <sup>13</sup>the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

### Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

<sup>1</sup>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!" <sup>18</sup>"Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

## Possible Hymns

To Bless the Earth, No. 38

A Sower Came from Ancient Hills, No. 171

## Quotes, Questions & Prompts for Continued Reflection, Meditation and Prayer

When has your spiritual life been most open and fertile?

What can we do to create more open and fertile "soil" in our community?

"We're all pretty bizarre. Some of us are just better at hiding it."

— Andrew Clark, "The Breakfast Club"