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**November 28, 2021** | *First Sunday of Advent: Hope*

Matthew 13:1–23 | “Sowing” (c.f. Mark 4:1–20; Luke 8:4–15)

As Jesus begins to teach the people about the kingdom he does so using a well known form called parables. Why doesn't he use direct speech? What should we expect for people listening. What do we learn ourselves for announcing the good news of the kingdom? The Parable of the Sower give us a key to how to hear Jesus's kingdom message rightly.

**December 5, 2021** | *Second Sunday of Advent: Peace*

Mark 4:26–29 | “Growing”

Too often the church talks about our building the kingdom of God on earth. However, Scripture reminds us that any kingdom we build becomes Babylon. Jesus's Parable of the Growing Seed reminds us that while there is a relationship that we have to the kingdom, we cannot cause God's kingdom to appear.

**December 12, 2021** | *Third Sunday of Advent: Joy*

Matthew 13:24–30; 36–43 | “Weeds”

The rule and reign of God is meant to bring freedom, life, and joy. So, it can be a bit confusing when the opposite of these things appear instead: captivity, death, and sorrow. How can it be that there are weeds in the midst of the kingdom field? More importantly, what should we do about them?

**December 19, 2021** | *Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love*

Matthew 13:31–33 | “Mustard & Yeast” (c.f. Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–21)

God's kingdom is expansive and transformative. As such we do not need to feel worry over the state of the world. God's rule and reign is working through, transforming and blessing throughly.

**December 26, 2021** | *Christmas Season: Boxing Day or Feast of St. Stephen*

Matthew 13:44–46 | “Treasure & Pearl”

The kingdom is given to us as a gift, but like all gifts it must be received. This kingdom is so great that in order to receive it we must use both hands. This means that only by emptying our hands of all else will be able to lay hold of the kingdom. But, this isn't a loss, only gain!

**January 2, 2022** | *Christmas Season*

Matthew 13:47–50 | “Net”

God's kingdom is open to all and should be a blessing to all. No one will be forced into it against their will, nor will they be programmed to want it. God's kingdom has come in Jesus's rule, but it is also coming in fulness some day in the future. At that time those who do not desire the kingdom will find themselves outside of it. Only in this way will God's kingdom be the full blessing to those who desire it.