

7th Sunday After Pentecost

July 19, 2020



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Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

SERVICE OF THE WORD

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Worship Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Worship Leader: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

Worship Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

Congregation: We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Gather Us In Vs. 1 & 4



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark - ness
2 We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old who
3 Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the
4 Not in the dark of build-ings con - fin - ing, not in some heav - en,



van - ished a - way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
yearn for your face; we have been sung through - out all of his - t'ry,
bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh - ters,
light years a - way— here in this place the new light is shin - ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
called to be light to the whole hu - man race.
call us a - new to be salt for the earth.
now is the king - dom, and now is the day.



Gath - er us in, the lost and for - sak - en, gath - er us in, the
Gath - er us in, the rich and the haugh - ty, gath - er us in, the
Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat the
Gath - er us in and hold us for - ev - er, gath - er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en,
proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly,
bread that is you; nour - ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion
make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.
give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.
lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.
fire . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: GATHER US IN, Marty Haugen

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APOSTOLIC GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

Congregation: Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 44:6-8

Introduction to the Lesson: *There are no other gods besides God: the word of the Lord does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel—and we—are redeemed.*

Reader: 6Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel,

and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

I am the first and I am the last;

besides me there is no god.

7Who is like me? Let them proclaim it,

let them declare and set it forth before me.

Who has announced from of old the things to come?

Let them tell us what is yet to be.

8Do not fear, or be afraid;

have I not told you from of old and declared it?

You are my witnesses!

Is there any god besides me?

There is no other rock; I know not one.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 86:11-17

The psalm for the day is read responsively.

Reader: ¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;

give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

**¹²I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and glorify your name forevermore.**

¹³For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the pit of death.

¹⁴**The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of violent people seeks my life; they have not set you before their eyes.**

¹⁵But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

¹⁶**Turn to me and have mercy on me;
give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your handmaid.**

¹⁷Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame; because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

SECOND READING Romans 8:12-25

Introduction to the Lesson: *For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.*

Reader: [Paul writes:] 12So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—13for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

18I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Introduction to the Gospel: *Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 13th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: 24[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field;25but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. 26So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ 28He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

36Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; 38the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, 39and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Impossible Purity

Maybe you have bought or been offered bottled water recently. Did it say “purified” on it? Did you assume that meant the water was totally pure? What if you learned that bottled water, even purified, always has some contaminants in it? Would you still drink it? You probably did.

Jesus’ parable of the weeds among the wheat reminds us of our desire for purity. It is tempting on first reading the parable to immediately ask ourselves, *So, who is a weed and who is wheat?* We might wonder if the people we don’t like much are weeds. We

might also be anxious to know whether *we* are wheat, children of the kingdom. Sorting it all out now and purifying the field would make things simpler.

Except everything in the parable says we don't get to sort things out! Surprisingly, Jesus lowers our sense of urgency to sort out good from bad in life. Jesus says it is better to live with ambiguity, better to accept impurity, than to try so hard to clean everything up now. Why? Because we risk great harm to others in trying to obtain a level of purity we can never have in this life.

The desire for purity, especially among religious persons, can be strong. For some, this means getting rid of people who fail to live up to certain moral standards. For others, it means judging people based on who we label them to be. But total purity never exists in nature, nor in humanity as a whole, nor in any single person.

Rather than worrying about whom to get rid of, with Jesus' help we trust that we are children of the kingdom by God's grace. We are included. When we know we are included and loved, we don't need to worry about another's status. That's for God to worry about. We are free to love others and ourselves, and to let God sort out the rest.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

On Eagle's Wings vs. 1 & 2



1 You who dwell in the shel-ter of the Lord, who a-bide in this shad-ow for life,



say to the Lord: "My ref - uge, my rock in whom I trust!"



And he will raise you up on ea-gle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,



make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.

Leader or All

2 The snare of the fowl-er will nev-er cap-ture you, and fam-ine will bring you no

fear; un-der God's wings your ref-uge, with faith-ful-ness your shield.

Final refrain

All

And he will raise you up on ea-gle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,

make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.

And hold you, hold you in the palm of his hand.

Text: Michael Joncas, b. 1957

Music: ON EAGLE'S WINGS, Michael Joncas

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: God of the harvest, you sow the good seed of the gospel of Jesus Christ into your field. Help your church throughout the world to be both diligent and patient, full of resolve and gentleness, that our witness may be faithful to your intentions. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of all space and time, your whole creation groans in labor pains, awaiting the gift of new birth. Renew the earth, sky, and sea, so that all your creation experiences freedom from the bondage of decay. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of the nations, teach us your ways, that we may walk in your truth. Mend the fabric of the human family, now torn apart by our fearful and warring ways (regions and nations in conflict may be named). Guide us by your mercy, grace, and steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of hope, you accompany those who suffer and are near to the brokenhearted. Open our hearts to your children who are lonely and abandoned, who feel trapped by despair, and all who suffer in any way (*especially* Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vici Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa and Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez and family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios those suffering from natural disasters (including COVID-19 and the flooding across the United States), violence, & terror, and the family and friends of the over 135,000 people in the United States & the 500,000 people worldwide who have died from COVID-19 including Anka Pink's grandmother. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of the seasons, in the midst of summer, give us refreshment, renewal, and new opportunities. We pray for the safety of those who travel. We pray for those who cannot take the rest they need. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Prayer Leader: God of life, those who have died in you shine like the sun in your endless kingdom. We remember with thanksgiving the saints of all times and places and saints close to us (*especially*). Gather us with them on the day of salvation. Lord, in your mercy,

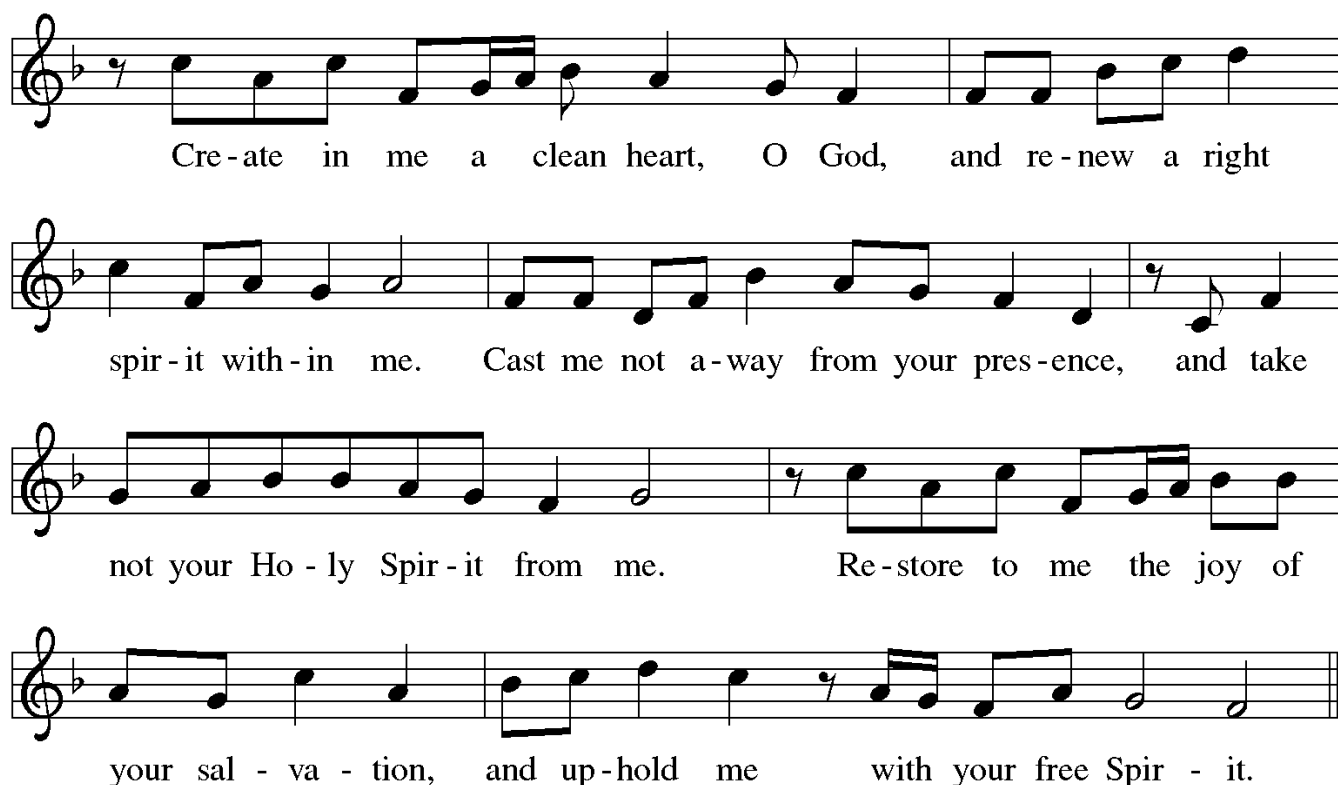
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can also fill out your attendance form on our website.



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923

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OFFERTORY

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities & in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

BLESSING

Worship Leader: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.



1 If you but trust in God to guide you with gen - tle
2 What gain is there in anx - ious weep - ing, in help - less



hand through all your ways, you'll find that God is there be -
an - ger and dis - tress? If you are in your Sav - ior's



side you when cross - es come, in try - ing days. Trust then in
keep - ing, in sor - row will he love you less? For Christ who



God's un - chang - ing love; build on the rock that will not move.
took for you a cross will bring you safe through ev - 'ry loss.

Text: Georg Neumark, 1621–1681; tr. composite
Music: WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT, Georg Neumark
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Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

If You But Trust in God to Guide You vs. 1 & 2

DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

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