

# *8th Sunday After Pentecost*

## *July 23, 2023*



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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.

Some practical things for you to know:

**Children:** All children, even those who are noisy, upset, or otherwise discombobulated, are always welcome here!

**Restrooms** are located to the left out of the doors you entered in to the narthex or lobby; ushers can further direct you.

**Holy Communion:** All baptized Christians are welcome to the Lord's Table. Our ushers will guide you.

## THE ORDER OF OUR WORSHIP

### PRELUDE

*We stand as we are able.*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who greets us in this and every season, whose word never fails, whose promise is sure.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Pastor: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Pastor: Merciful God,

**Congregation: we confess that we have sinned. We have hurt our community. We have squandered your blessings. We have hoarded your bounty. We have spoken falsely. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

Pastor: God is a cup of cold water when we thirst. God offers boundless grace when we fail.

Claim the gift of God's mercy: you are freed and forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### GATHERING HYMN

*Sing to the Lord of Harvest*

ELW 694

### GREETING

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

Let us pray. 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. **Congregation: Amen.**  
*We sit.*

## FIRST READING

**Isaiah 44:6-8**

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*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.*

<sup>6</sup>Thus 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.  
<sup>7</sup>Who 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.  
<sup>8</sup>Do 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.

The reading is concluded:

The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 86:11-17

<sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;  
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.  
<sup>12</sup>**I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
and glorify your name forevermore.**  
<sup>13</sup>For great is your love toward me;  
you have delivered me from the pit of death.  
<sup>14</sup>**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.**  
<sup>15</sup>But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

<sup>16</sup>Turn to me and have mercy on me;

give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your handmaid.

<sup>17</sup>Show 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

Page 919

*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.*

[Paul writes:] <sup>12</sup>So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—<sup>13</sup>for 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. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup>For 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!” <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and 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.

<sup>18</sup>I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; <sup>20</sup>for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that 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. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; <sup>23</sup>and 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. <sup>24</sup>For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The reading is concluded:

The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

*We stand.*

## ALLELUIA VERSE



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

## GOSPEL

**Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

Page 795

*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.*

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

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field;<sup>25</sup> but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup>And 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?' <sup>28</sup>He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' <sup>29</sup>But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup>Let 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.' "

<sup>36</sup>Then 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." <sup>37</sup>He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; <sup>38</sup>the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, <sup>42</sup>and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, 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. Let anyone with ears listen!"

*After the reading...*

Pastor: The gospel of the Lord. **Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*We Sit*

## SERMON

*We Stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

***On Eagle's Wings***

ELW 787 vs. 1-3

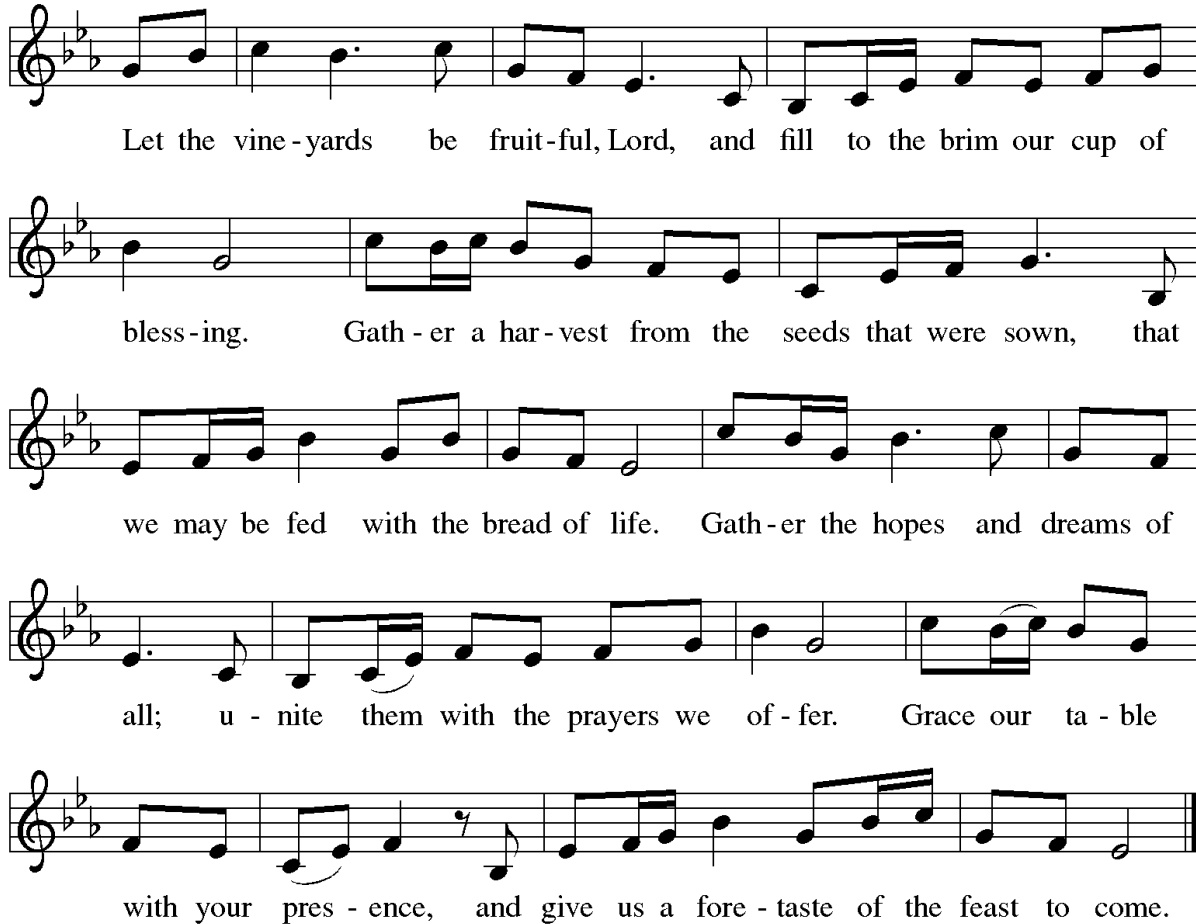
*We Sit*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Each petition ends either* "Lord, in your mercy," and we respond **"Hear our prayer."**  
*OR* "Hear us, O God" and we respond **"Your mercy is great."**

## OFFERING

*We Stand*  
**OFFERTORY**



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble  
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980  
Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927  
Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord . **Congregation: Amen.**

**DIALOGUE**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.  
**Congregation: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Pastor: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Pastor: 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.**

*We Sit*

### **SPECIAL MUSICAL OFFERING**

*After all have receive Communion, we stand.*

### **TABLE BLESSING**

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Cong.: Amen.**

### **SENDING OF COMMUNION**

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Cong.: Amen.**



## BLESSING

Pastor: The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed ✠ bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age. **Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

*We Plow the Fields and Scatter*

ELW 681

## SHARING OF PEACE & DISMISSAL

Together we have heard God's Word and shared in the Lord's Supper, we have given and have been forgiven. The peace of the Lord be with you all. **Congregation: And also with you.**

Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. Share the harvest! **Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

*Light refreshments are served after the church service on the front porch just to the left as you exit. Please come join us for cookies and conversation.*

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## Sing to the Lord of Harvest



1 Sing to the Lord of har - vest your songs of love and praise;  
2 God makes the clouds drop fat - ness, the des - erts bloom and spring,  
3 Bring to this sa - cred al - tar the gifts his good-ness gave,



with joy - ful hearts and voic - es your al - le - lu - ias raise;  
the hills leap up in glad - ness, the val - leys laugh and sing.  
the gold - en sheaves of har - vest, the souls Christ died to save.



by him the roll - ing sea - sons in fruit - ful or - der move;  
God fills them with his full - ness, all things with large in - crease,  
Your hearts lay down be - fore him when at his feet you fall,

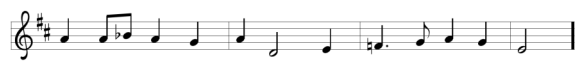


sing to the Lord of har - vest a joy - ous song of love.  
and crowns the year with good - ness, with plen - ty and with peace.  
and with your lives a - dore him who gave his life for all.

## On Eagle's Wings



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.



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.



3 You need not fear the ter-ror of the night, nor the ar-row that flies by



day; though thou-sands fall a - bout you, near you it shall not come.



4 For to the an-gels God's giv - en a com-mand to



guard you in all of your ways; up - on their hands they will



bear you up, lest you dash your foot a - gainst a stone.



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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## We Plow the Fields and Scatter



1 We plow the fields and scat - ter the good seed on the land,  
 2 You on - ly are the mak - er of all things near and far.  
 3 We thank you, our cre - a - tor, for all things bright and good,



but it is fed and wa - tered by God's al - might - y hand,  
 You paint the way - side flow - er, you light the eve - ning star.  
 the seed - time and the har - vest, our life, our health, our food.



who sends the snow in win - ter, the warmth to swell the grain,  
 The winds and waves o - bey you, by you the birds are fed;  
 No gifts have we to of - fer for all your love im - parts,



the breez - es and the sun - shine, and soft re - fresh - ing rain.  
 much more to us, your chil - dren, you give our dai - ly bread.  
 but what you most would trea - sure—our hum - ble, thank - ful hearts.

### *Refrain*



All good gifts a - round us are sent from heav'n a - bove.



We thank you, Lord, we thank you, Lord, for all your love.