

**SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER  
PENTECOST**

*A Service of the Word*

*July 19, 2020*



**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**85 East Brandt Boulevard**  
**Landisville, PA 17538**

*United in Christ,  
we are called to love and serve.*

**SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER  
PENTECOST**  
*Service of the Word*



*P: Pastor   A: Assisting Minister   C: Congregation & Pastor*

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

*We Praise You, O God*

D. Wood

† **THE GATHERING** †

*The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week,  
the day of Christ's resurrection.*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** God of long-range planning and hope, we confess that we are impatient with your timing. We want immediate judgement on the sins of others, though not on our own. The time of our own suffering seems endless, but we can shrug off the duration of deprivation of others. We want instant recognition of our achievements but are jealous of the honors given to others. Forgive the pride that suggests that we know better than you do what should be done and when, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who struggled against doing your will but did it nevertheless. Amen.

*Silence for reflection.*

**P:** Friends, hear the Good News! We have been saved, though only in hope. The splendor is still in store for us. Believe the Good News! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

*(Verse 1)*

When morning gilds the skies,  
my heart awaking cries:  
may Jesus Christ be praised!  
When evening shadows fall,  
this rings my curfew call:  
may Jesus Christ be praised!

*(Verse 2)*

When mirth for music longs,  
this is my song of songs:  
may Jesus Christ be praised!  
God's holy house of prayer  
has none that can compare  
with "Jesus Christ be praised!"

*(Verse 3)*

No lovelier antiphon  
in all high heav'n is known  
than "Jesus Christ be praised!"  
There to the eternal Word  
the eternal psalm is heard:  
oh, Jesus Christ be praised!

*(Verse 4)*

Let all of humankind  
in this their concord find:  
may Jesus Christ be praised!  
Let all the earth around  
ring joyous with the sound:  
may Jesus Christ be praised!



(Verse 5)

Sing, sun and stars of space,  
sing, all who see his face,  
sing, "Jesus Christ be praised!"  
God's whole creation o'er,  
today and evermore,  
shall Jesus Christ be praised!

## **THE GREETING**

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

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray. Eternal God, merciful judge, nourish our hopes with inspired promises so our timeline may be synchronized with yours as it was with the earthly time of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

## **† THE WORD †**

*God speaks to us in Scriptures read and preached.*

## **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 44:6-8

A: A reading from Isaiah.

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. 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. 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.

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

## **SECOND READING**

Romans 8:12-25

A: A reading from Romans.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh -- 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. For all who are led by the

Spirit of God are children of God. 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!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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.

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

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

### **GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter.

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

[Jesus] put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 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?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers to collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

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.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good

seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

P: The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

**SERMON**

Pastor Barbara Caruana

P:

*Grace and peace to you from  
God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.*

Are you a weed? Are you? I know that's a strange question, but that's the question each of us is being asked in today's gospel story. Are we weeds? And then we hear the difference between weeds and wheat in a field.

Jesus tells the parable about a farmer who sowed some wheat seeds into his field. Everything was going just dandy until one day the farmer's servants noticed some weeds, which looked just like wheat, were growing in the fields. They ran to the owner and asked him about the kinds of seeds that he used. He said he had used good seed, but an enemy had sown bad seed in his field during the night. Being concerned about what had happened, the servants asked if they should go and pull out the weeds. But the master says, "No". The farmer then explains that until the weeds and the wheat ripen, no one can really tell them apart. By pulling the weeds, they might disturb the good wheat. He tells them that they should leave the fields alone, and then when the wheat is ready for harvest, the weeds will have bloomed also, and they would be able to tell the difference between the wheat and the weeds.. Then the harvesters could come and pull out the weeds and burn them. The wheat would be harvested after the weeds were pulled out.

Jesus then explains the parable by saying that the farmer, or the master, is the Son of God; the field is the world; the good seed are the people of the kingdom of God; and the bad seeds or the weeds are the sons of the evil one who sowed them into the field. Jesus then says that you can't tell the difference between *these two groups of people*, but when the end of the age comes, and the harvest of the world is ready,

then the angels will separate the evil ones from the righteous ones. The evil ones will be burned, and the righteous people will live with him for eternity.

So, which are you? Are you the weeds or the wheat? This parable wasn't told so we might go around and judge others and decide who is a weed and who is wheat. Jesus says loud and clear that it's his responsibility ... the function of the Father and his angels to do the judging. This parable reminds us to take a close look at our lives with the understanding that one can judge one's own heart and then repent and bear good fruit. So today, I don't want you to look at your neighbors and say, well, pastor is really talking about you, or you, or you. Today's sermon is addressed to each of you individually. It's a time to look at your own sins, at the way you conduct your own lives, then make a decision about repentance for your own life and turning around, and bearing fruit for Jesus.

As we look at ourselves this morning, as we compare ourselves to the example of weeds or wheat, we can ask this question of ourselves. Do we want to look like the wheat when it's convenient for us, and then be like weeds the rest of the time? Or putting it another way, does our faith in Jesus and the responsibility for living a committed kind of life get turned on and off when it makes things easier for us?

Many people label Christians hypocrites. They say some people have expectations of others that don't apply to themselves. Are you like that? Am I like that? Do we have one standard for ourselves, and another standard for others? Or are we consistent? Do we live out what Jesus demonstrated in his life as the way of living each day we face on this earth? Ask yourself if being a follower of Jesus stops when you leave the church and starts again when you enter the doors again next Sunday? Or does being a Christian do something to your entire life, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day? Judge for yourself because you're the only one who can answer those questions for yourself. You're the only one who knows what's in the corner of your mind and heart.

Here's another question for us: Are we being productive with our lives? Are we bearing fruit for the sake of the gospel? Jesus says that the wheat bears good fruit, but the weeds bear no fruit. Are you willing to bear fruit to get involved for the sake of the gospel message? Our church is always in need of people to help with projects or willing to be on church council. We constantly need Sunday school teachers, Bible Study teachers, and a whole host of others to take responsibility and make things happen in the church. But I wonder why it's so difficult to find people to do these functions if we all want to bear fruit? I wonder why so many people hate to

step up and accept responsibility. Is it because too many of us are weeds and bear no fruit? Is it that it seems so difficult to be like the wheat in the field? Jesus asks us today to search our hearts and souls to see if we will bear fruit for him. He asks us if we, you and I, are willing to get involved for the sake of his gospel? He's asking us if we can bear fruit for him.

Another question that faces us today is this: Do we choke the good seeds around us with our selfishness? A farmer wants only good wheat in his field, because the weeds will rob the field and choke off the good seed so that they won't bear as much good fruit. Are you the kind of person, who makes the yield less? Am I the kind of person who hinders those who are trying to bear good fruit?

Sometimes we're selfish with our own ideas, our own feelings about things, that we choke out the ideas and the enthusiasm of others with our own agendas. As we have looked at ourselves today, are we to conclude that all is lost for us. I hope not. What I think is implied in this parable is the need for repentance. Jesus will come with the angels at the end of the age, but until that time, we still have time to repent, to change our ways, to reach out to others who need our help, to be compassionate, to be loving, and to be the caring concerned people Jesus wants us to be. There is time for repentance. There is time for us to confront the evil in our lives and with the help of God's spirit to change our lives, to turn away from being weeds to bearing much fruit.

Let me tell you a story about how a little girl helped the neighbor bully change his ways. The bully's name was Todd, his parents were divorced, and he was left to fend for himself. He's rude and, for an 8-year old, he can swear pretty darn good. When he comes over to Heidi's house, the quiet surrounding can turn quickly into chaos with fighting, crying and disobeying rules. But Heidi didn't cut Todd out from her circle of friends. Instead, if Todd swore, she told him it was wrong. God didn't like that. If he started a fight, she told him he'd have to go home. And on Sunday morning, she would take 2 children's bulletins and 2 Bible coloring pages and take one set to Todd. She's even taken him to Vacation Bible School.

Heidi has not weeded out the bully. And Todd tries hard to be good. He's happier now, more alert, and plays well with others. He now has more fun playing than fighting. He and Heidi have even talked about Jesus and Bible stories. You see, Todd needed some help with his repentance. He needed someone who was willing to care for him, not in a judgmental way, but in a loving caring way. Todd is less of a weed now among the children on his street, and he continues to grow.



As you look at yourself this morning, remember there's time for repentance and there's time to change. Remember there are those around you with loving, non-judgmental hearts that will help you if you want help. God has given all people the opportunity to be saved. He has given us many opportunities to repent and to bear fruit. The sower has done all the sowing, he has planted the seeds, he will nourish the seeds, he will water them, care for them lovingly, and all he asks us to do is let him. Will you let God's spirit work in your life so you can bear fruit?

Will you? Let it be so. Amen.

**SERMON HYMN**

*Blessed Assurance*

ELW 638

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long:  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight:  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long:  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, all is at rest;  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with his goodness,  
Lost in his love.



This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long:  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**P:** We now proclaim our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed

**C:** **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

**A:** Let us pray.

Lord God, we know about weakness. We know about it from personal experience. We also know about evil because we see it everywhere, even inside ourselves. But the truth is, Lord, you know us better than we know ourselves. You see our weaknesses and you are aware of every evil thought and act. Yet, you love us, and you are patient with us.

Lord, you know we jump at opportunities to focus on the weaknesses and evil deeds of others. We are slow to admit our own problems. Instead, we want to cover up our own weaknesses and evil deeds. We even want to hide from you at times. Yet, you still love us and are patient with us.

Lord, keep us honest, and may we reward your patience with our sincere desire to live life your way.

Lord, help all people throughout the world to be both diligent and patient, full of resolve and gentleness, so that we may be faithful to your desires.

Lord, teach us your ways so we may walk in your truth. Mend the fabric of the human family which has been torn apart by conflict and fears. Guide us by your mercy, grace, and steadfast love.

Lord, be with those who suffer or are in need. Open our hearts to your children who are lonely and abandoned, who feel trapped by despair, and all who call out to you, especially those on Zion's Prayer List. May your eternal hope and love bring them hope and joy.

Lord, we remember all who are renewed and refreshed in your eternal kingdom and pray that one day we may share with them in that glory.

And now Lord, we ask that you accept these prayers we offer to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who taught us to pray together saying ...

**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 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.**

† **A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** †  
*A prayer of thanks to God by his faithful people.*

P: Creator and redeemer of all, we sing for joy to you because even through our weaknesses and evil ways, you care for us and provide for us. You accept us despite our history of failures. By faith we experience your grace and the renewal of our relationship with you in Christ. We often find it difficult to rejoice in our troubles, but we do rejoice in the endurance and hope which your approval brings. Above all, we give thanks for the gift of your Holy Spirit filling us with love for you and the hope of sharing your glory. In the name of your precious Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.



† THE SENDING †

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

HYMN

*For the Fruit of All Creation*

ELW 679

*(Verse 1)*

For the fruit of all creation,  
Thanks be to God.

For these gifts to ev'ry nation,  
Thanks be to God,

For the plowing, sowing, reaping,  
Silent growth while we are sleeping,  
Future needs in earth's safe keeping,  
Thanks be to God.

*(Verse 2)*

In the just reward of labor,  
God's will is done.

In the help we give our neighbor,  
God's will is done.

In our world-wide task of caring  
For the hungry and despairing,  
In the harvests we are sharing,  
God's will is done.

*(Verse 3)*

For the harvests of the Spirit,  
Thanks be to God.

For the good we all inherit,  
Thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us,  
For the truths that still confound us,  
Most of all, that love has found us,  
Thanks be to God.



## **BLESSING**

P: As you meet the week ahead, with whatever joys and challenges it holds, do not be discouraged or disheartened. Remember the glory that awaits you as a child of God. Hold on to that truth; live in that hope; and may the peace of God, the blessing of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit be with you and among you. Amen.

## **DISMISSAL**

P: United in Christ, go forth to love and serve.

## **POSTLUDE**

*Ar Hyd Y Nos*

J. Nixon

## **PRAYER LIST**

### ***FOR HEALING***

Barbara Williams	Dave Wise	Kevin Reinhart
Fred Hamor	Joe Adams	Judie Ingersoll
Lucy Davis	Bill Grove	Kay Crawford
Holly Hoover	Betty Stoner	Don Heartter
Adele King	Kate Donnan	
Janet & Harry Musselman		
Bob Steinmetz (Brother of Diane Gerlach)		
Homer Dietz (Brother-in-law of Harry Musselman)		
Ginny Eisenhauer (Sister of Dolly Overly)		
Ron Sahd (Friend of Dave Wise)		
Wilson Pipkin (Father of Wilson Pipkin)		
Loma Slike (Mother of Sue Wise)		
Mike LaFatta (Son-in-law of Bill & Julia Grove)		

### ***FOR COMFORT, PEACE, STRENGTH, & SAFETY***

Richard and Marilyn Heim	Arlene Miller	Deb McCartney
Marlin Zimmerman	Bette Geibel	Jennifer Thompson
Charlotte & George Potts	Ted Symonds & Family	
For the family and friends grieving the death of Betty Benner (Sister of Sam King)		
Residents and Staff of the Phoenixville Care & Rehabilitation Center		
Arlene Wise (Sister-in-law of Dave Wise)		
Vaun Hile (Father of Lynda Sherwood)		
Jennifer Kready (Daughter of Dave & Donna Dumeyer)		

### ***FOR PROTECTION FOR MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS***

Christopher Wright  
Chris Andrew  
Thom Whitesel  
Ryan Stitzel  
Doug Kautter  
Justin Gorlaski  
Corey Landis (Nephew of Jesse & Pat Landis)  
David Adams (Son-in-law of John & Kathleen Hay, and husband of Liz)



*Never Underestimate the power of prayer.*