



Celebrate

Sunday, July 19, 2026
8th Sunday after Pentecost

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 when 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.

Prayer of the Day

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

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.

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.
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.

or Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 [not printed]

God's deeds of forgiveness and gift of hope indicate that God's faithful people must also show kindness. No other god cares for all people.

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 enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it

suffers together the pains of labor, 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 one already sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

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.

[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!"

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

God our source, protect your church from those who sow weeds among the wheat. Where we trade grace for judgment, restore us, and where we get lost among the complexities of life, guide us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God our creator, sustain creation in places not easily seen; the depths of oceans, microscopic plants and animals, galaxies beyond our own. May we share earth's dedication to hope for what we do not yet see. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God our soil, we yearn to live on your lands and waters with justice and in righteousness. Renew the hearts of all in authority, that our leaders guide wisely toward the flourishing of all. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God our rock, be a source of constancy for those whose lives have been uprooted by war, eviction, global climate change, unemployment, harassment, false witness to their character, or illness or injury. (*We pray especially for . . .*) God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God our teacher, guide and provide for all summer camp staff and campers, daycare professionals, librarians, summer school educators and coaches, teachers preparing for the coming academic year, and youth becoming first-time babysitters. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God our hope, the message of your salvation is planted among us in all times and places. We give you thanks for the witness of all the saints who shine like the sun in your presence. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 75. **Tuesday** Zephaniah 3:1-13. **Wednesday** (Mary Magdalene, Apostle) John 20:1-2, 11-18. **Thursday** (commemoration of Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the church, died 1373) Psalm 119:129-136. **Friday** Acts 7:44-53. **Saturday** (James, Apostle) Mark 10:35-45. **Ninth Sunday after Pentecost** 1 Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:129-136; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52.

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