

**Church of the Divine Love**  
**EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – PROPER 11**  
**JULY 23, 2023 9:00 A.M.**  
**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 44:6-8**

Psalm 86:11-17

Second Lesson: **Romans 8:12-25**

Gradual Hymn #

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

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn –

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A	page 361
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
Hymn during Consecration – on insert	
The Lord’s Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn –	
Dismissal	

### **Sermon Sunday July 23th, 2023**

Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-11,22-23; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30,36-43.

#### **Sisters and brothers in Christ,**

What feeds and sustains your life today? What relationships, values, and beliefs nourish your life? Who are the people that enrich and enliven your life? What are you needing and asking for when you pray that God will give you your daily bread?

In whatever ways you might have answered those questions you have described the wheat in the garden of your soul. And wherever there is a garden you’ll also find weeds. We don’t plant them and we don’t want them, but as today’s parable says somehow, they always manage to show up. Weeds happen. And that’s true whether it’s the garden in your backyard or the garden of your life. The wheat and weeds of our lives grow side by side. Their roots can intertwine. And sometimes what looks like wheat is really false wheat, a weed. It means that every gardener of life must be discerning about what she or he is growing, what needs to be tended to, and what needs to be uprooted. Anything that is not wheat is probably a weed. Weeds are the things that try to take over the field of our life, disfigure the beauty of our garden, and choke out the wheat that feeds, sustains, and nourishes our soul.

I used to think that if you did the right thing, worked hard, had good intentions, and said your prayers in short, if you sowed good seed, you wouldn't have to deal with the weeds. That's not, however, what happens in today's parable or in life. It seems like I spend more and more time dealing with the weeds in my life. Maybe you do too. So, let's talk about some weeds. Have you ever claimed a particular value or belief and then done or said the very things that undermine or contradict that value or belief? There's a weed in your field. It's what Paul was talking about when he said, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15).

Do you ever feel like you're not enough? Are you always trying to prove yourself, to be liked and approved of? I wonder what weed is choking your enoughness, your value, your self-worth. Have you ever quietly or even not so quietly celebrated someone else's failure? Have you ever felt better about yourself because someone else was struggling? Have you ever been unable or unwilling to celebrate another's joy or success? Are you envious of another? I suspect there's a weed that needs pulling. Are you holding grudges or resentments? Do you live with a destructive anger? Are you always on the defensive? Do you replay old arguments in your head in such a way that you are the winner? Is it hard to listen to and hear another? If so, weeds are growing. Are you withholding forgiveness from another? Are you refusing to ask another for forgiveness? Are there amends to be made that you keep putting off? What weeds need to be uprooted so you can reconcile with another and yourself?

If your reading of scripture is narrow and exclusive rather than large and inclusive, if the gospel is good news only for certain ones and not everyone, if the bread of life is stale and day old, then weeds are taking over and need to be pulled. Is your world divided into right and wrong, good and bad? Do you find yourself drawing lines in the sand, needing to be right or have the final word? Weeds are growing there. Do you live as if someone must lose in order for you to win? Does someone else need to be wrong so you can be right? Is your life based on comparison to and competition with others? Are you keeping score of your life or another's life? That's a weedy way to live.

Do you find yourself making judgments about others and the weeds in their garden? Do you talk about them instead of talking with them? How many of your conversations are based in gossip or criticism? Why is it we can so clearly see the single weed in our neighbor's garden but not the entire patch in our own? (Matthew 7:3). Do you see the weeds of racism, discrimination, and oppression in America today? Do you see the economic weeds by which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer? Do you see the weeds that discriminate against people based upon their religion, immigration status, or sex? Are you watering those weeds or are you pulling them up? Are you living less than who you are or want to be? Have you sometimes been afraid to say or do what you knew was the right thing to say or do? In what ways has fear possessed and paralyzed you? Fear is a deeply rooted weed in most of our gardens. Do you feel trapped by your past, overwhelmed by guilt, defined by shame? What are you addicted to? What idols control your life? Those are weeds taking over your life.

We pledge ourselves to be one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. But the weeds of division, mistrust, and self-interest are choking the life out of that pledge. What controls your life today? What keeps you from living the life you want and from being your truest and most authentic self? What is stealing your life? What weeds are disfiguring the beauty of your garden? That's a lot of weeds. And the list could go on and on.

Do you know how I know about those weeds, why I can identify them? Those are the weeds I battle. They're the weeds growing in the fields of my life. They are what chokes my soul and why I can't breathe. They disfigure the beauty of my garden. Some of those weeds I've pulled. Some still need to be pulled. Some keep coming back. And some I continue to ignore or even water. Weeding the garden of our life is not about what's wrong, defective, or unacceptable in our life. It's about making room for more life, discovering the wheat that has always been there, reclaiming the beauty that has been covered over, and trusting the good seed that was planted in the beginning. Weeding takes away in order to reveal what is already there. Weeding the garden of our life returns our focus to the wheat.

Every time we pull a weed, we also reap a harvest. Every pulled weed is a recognition and an affirmation of life and life abundant, for yourself or another. And every day is harvesting day. And every day there are weeds to be pulled. That means we must always be paying attention to what's growing in our garden. I've told you about some of the weeds I deal with in my garden. What about you? Are you willing, right now, before you leave here today, to name just one weed that's got to go?

Forgive the weeds? Love the weeds? Remember, I told you the gospel is always a challenge. So, yes, forgive them. Love them. Maybe that's how the wheat begins to disentangle its roots from the weeds and show itself to be wheat and not weeds. Maybe love and forgiveness are what life in the mixed field of God's kingdom and this world is like. In a world full of weeds maybe the best strategy we can adopt as Christian people is the strategy Paul suggests in Romans 12:21: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good". In its surface, there is not much to be said about this parable except make sure you're not a weed. **Amen.**

8 PENTECOST            9:00 AM            HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II            (also on zoom)

MONDAY            8:30 PM            AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY            7:00 PM            AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY            10AM-2PM            THRIFT SHOP

8:30 PM            AA MEETING

SATURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

9 PENTECOST 9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)  
10:00 AM VESTRY MEETING

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Jess Berbeck	Anthony Giordano

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

### PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Kaylee
Bob Curley	Arlene Goodenough	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Michael & Family	Warren	Dennis
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Phil Ryder	Carolyn

Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Christopher	Amy
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Judy
Ciara	Celeste	

All people and countries suffering from violence and hatred.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.  
Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

The departed: Gary Johnson

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,

Lay my life before you,

How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus  
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn

but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So  
mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that

all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince

of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions

and glory, now and for ever. Amen